Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata

by

Asanga and Maitreya

with a Commentary by

Thrangu Rinpoche

Geshe Lharampa



Translated by

Jules Levinsion

Asanga in the fourth century meditated on Maitreya for twelve years and then was able to meet the Maitreya Buddha (the next Buddha) directly, who gave him five works including this text. Asanga then went on to found the Mind-only or Chittamatra school of Buddhism.

This text, which contains both the root verses of Maitreya and a commentary on these verses by Thrangu Rinpoche, begins by giving the characteristics of dharma which is ordinary phenomena as we perceive it as unenlightened beings. Phenomena is described in detail by giving its characteristics, its constituents or elements, and finally its source which is the mind. Discussed are the eight consciousnesses especially the alaya consciousness and how it creates the appearance of this world. Understanding dharma allows us to understand how we build up a false illusion of this world and this then leads to our problems in samsara.

Next, the text discusses dharmata or phenomena as it really is, not as it appears, in detail. In describing this sphere of reality or pure being, the text gives the characteristics of dharmata, where it is located, and the kinds of meditation needed to develop a perception of the true nature of reality.

Finally, there is a discussion of how one transforms ordinary dharma into dharmata, i.e. how one reaches awakening or enlightenment. This is discussed in ten famous points and this is actually a guide or a map to how to proceed along the Buddhist path.

This text has been extensively studied in Tibet, particulary among the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions. Now the student can read this profound work and a clear commentary on it by a world-renowned scholar who has been studying and also putting this text into practice for the last half century.

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Sanskrit: dharma-dharmata-vibhaga-karika.
Tibetan: *chos dang chos nyid nam par 'byed pa'i tsig le'ur byas pa.*

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Note

Technical words are italicized the first time they are used to alert the reader that they may be found in the Glossary of Terms.

Tibetan words are given as they are pronounced, not spelled in Tibetan. Their actual spelling may be found in the Glossary of Tibetan Terms.

We use the convention of using B.C.E. (Before Common Era) for "B. C." and C.E. (Common Era) for "A. D."

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Outline of the Text

Chapter 1

An Introduction to the Text

A. THE MEANING OF THE TITLE

1a.[1]*In Sanskrit: dharma-dharmata-vibhaga-karika.*
1b. In Tibetan: chös dang chös nyid nam par 'byed pa'i tsig le'ur byas pa.[2]

This text is an exposition of the *Dharma-dharmata-vibhaga* in Sanskrit or *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* in English. The word *dharma* means "phenomena" and *dharmata* means "pure phenomena." This treatise or *shastra* was given by the Regent of the Victorious One, Maitreya and is known as one of *The Five Books of Maitreya*. The Maitreya texts are important to Buddhist text of the *Middle-way* (Skt. *Madhyamaka*) and learned scholars of India and Tibet have debated the meaning of these texts in great detail and at length.

How This Text Was Written[3]

There is a Tibetan scholar named Kanga Tsultrim who wrote a book in which he argued that this text did not come from the Buddha Maitreya but by a human being whose name was Maitreyanatha and that Asanga received this text from him. My own opinion is simply that this person is overly involved with logic and has no confidence in dharma and no confidence in the existence of the pure realm of Tushita where Asanga received Maitreya's teachings. So he wrote this from the point of view of having little faith and confidence in the dharma. However, Maitreya did give these texts directly to Asanga. He taught them explicitly and that is well-known to a great many *panditas* and *siddhas* who have also received such a direct transmission of knowledge.[4] In fact, the Asanga went to the heaven of *Tushita* and received this text from Maitreya.

At the time of the Asanga, the principal place for the study of the dharma in India was the Nalanda monastic university. A short time previous to Asanga's birth a great fire had broken out at Nalanda and destroyed many books, in particular, the texts of the

Abhidharma. It was not possible to repair that damage right away so a nun called Tsawai Tsultrim thought, "I won't be able to refurbish and spread this teaching by myself. I could, however, give up the nun's life and give birth to sons who would be able to study these teachings, that would allow for the restoration of the Abhidharma teachings." She did so and gave birth to two sons: Asanga whose father came from royalty, and Vasubhandu whose father came from the Brahmin cast. These brothers spread the Buddhist teaching widely and, in particular, the teachings of the Abhidharma.

According to the tradition of the time, a son took up the work that his father had done. So at a certain point, the two sons of the former nun Tsawai Tsultrim asked her, "Who are our fathers? What work do they do? We want to prepare for the work that our fathers do." The mother replied to them, "Taking up the livelihood of your father is not the purpose of your being here, rather the purpose for your being here is to train in the Abhidharma teachings. A great deal of harm has come to these teachings and they have been damaged and have practically disappeared. So that they won't disappear completely, you need to study and teach them. That is the reason why you are here."

The younger son, Vasubhandu, went to study with a Kashmiri teacher called Gendün Tsabmo and received the teachings on the Abhidharma of the lesser vehicle or the *hinayana* which now is called the Thravada tradition.[5] There is also the greater vehicle or *mahayana* and the views and teachings of the mahayana go further than the hinayana. For that reason, the elder son, Asanga, practiced meditation diligently trying to meet Maitreya so that he would be able to spread these very profound teachings of the mahayana. He was able to do so and was able to return to the central country and spread the teachings there.

The two sons did what their mother had requested of them. Asanga went into retreat and practiced for twelve years to achieve a direct transmission from Maitreya. During these twelve years he endured much hardship. On several occasions he became discouraged and lost confidence and broke his retreat only to return to it again. However, arousing his confidence and courage again, he was able to continue his practice for twelve years and at the end he met face-to-face with the Maitreya Buddha. He then went to Tushita with Maitreya and there listened to the oral instructions of the Maitreya Buddha. From listening to these oral instructions, Asanga received what are known as *The Five Works of Maitreya*. This text known as *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* is one of these five texts.

Mahamudra

Tibet was renowned throughout the world as being the home of the *secret matrayana* teachings, which are very similar to the *vajrayana* teachings. However, not only was the varjayana taught in Tibet, but the mahayana dharma was also studied and practiced. With the vajrayana being widely practiced in Tibet, meditation was also practiced. There are two particular traditions of the vajrayana widely practiced: *mahamudra* or the "great symbol" and *dzogchen* or "great completeness." It is the *sutras* or the teachings of the Buddha and the *shastras* or the commentaries that were composed in India by the great scholars and accomplished persons. In order to achieve this very high view of mahamudra and dzogchen, one needs to cut one's own doubt in order to eliminate hindrances of not falling into various sorts of errors or aberrations. What helps eliminating one's doubt, hindrances, errors is to listen to and contemplate the mahayana dharma.

Just studying and understanding the dharma of the mahayana is not enough, because in addition we need the experience of meditation to truly realize this dharma. True realization requires the oral instructions of the mahamudra or dzogchen. Without these it is impossible to achieve the profound experience and the completion of mahamudra in a rapid manner. Therefore, an introduction to mahamudra or dzogchen is of great importance.

The Shastras

When it came to practice in Tibet, the practice of the panditas and adepts was that of the secret mantra vajrayana. However, the teachings they heard and thought about were those of the mahayana. Therefore, we need to listen to and contemplate the mahayana teachings. The actual words spoken directly by the Buddha were recorded in the sutras and the commentaries called shastras were composed by the scholars on the meaning of these sutras. Of these two, the treatises or shastras are more important. Many do not share the Tibetan belief that the shastras to be more important by saying, "Because, after all, the root of the Buddha's tradition is the Buddha himself and therefore one ought to take his words (the sutras) to be the main material to be studied."

The reason the commentaries are of greater importance than the sutras is that the Buddha presented the teachings like this: A student would come to him and ask a question and the Buddha would give a

reply. Some pupils came to the Buddha within faith, devotion, intelligence, the desire to practice, and asked their questions from that point of view. Others had little faith, devotion or great yearning for the dharma and would ask questions and Buddha would give different answers to these students according to their attitude or disposition. Thus, with the Buddha's speech there is the *definitive teaching* (Tib. *ngedön*) and there is the *provisional teaching* or teaching that would require interpretation (Tib. *drangdon*). If the Buddha were to give those without much faith and devotion the definitive teaching, they wouldn't have confidence in it. So, he gave them something else to think about, rather than giving them the actual or definitive teaching. He gave them the provisional teachings.

So, if we were to read the sutras directly, we would make the mistake of taking a definitive teaching for being an provisional teaching or of taking an provisional teaching for being a definitive teaching. We would not know how to sort them out and figure out which one is which. Fortunately, after the Buddha's presentation of the dharma, many scholars with their own higher intelligence (Skt. *prajna*), their own experience understood which from among the teachings were the definitive teachings and which were the provisional teachings. They wrote treatises differentiating the definitive from the provisional teachings. This is the reason why the shastras are more important, than the sutras.

There are two types of shastras: the shastras themselves and the oral instructions. The shastras themselves approach various topics through reasoning and explain in detail and with great clarity topics such as the five aggregates (Skt. *skandha*), the twelve sense fields (Skt. *ayatana*) and the eighteen elements (Skt *dhatu*). These topics are principally presented in long analytical treatises. The *oral instructions* (Tib. *dag nag*) tell one how to practice by presenting instructions in a very brief way. Of these two, the shastras and the oral instructions, the oral instructions are more important.

Among the five books of Maitreya, four books are classed as shastras proper and one falls into the class of oral instructions. The four that are shastras are very extensive. They are *Ornament for Clear Realization* (Skt. *Abhisamayalankara*),[6] the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras* (Skt. *Mahayanasutralankara*), *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes* (Skt. *Madhyantavibhanga*)[7] and *The Changeless Continuum* (Skt. *Uttara Tantra*).[8] The present text *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* is very brief and direct in its presentation and is included within the class of oral instructions.

Thus, for those who have faith and are exerting themselves in practice, the oral instructions are more important than the shastras.

Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata is an oral instruction because in the practice of shamatha and vipashyana meditation of mahamudra and dzogchen it is vipashyana or insight meditation that is mainly discussed. In these meditations we are introduced to the true nature (Tib. *nge lug*) of the mind. We reach Buddhahood in mahamudra and dzogchen by abandoning the disturbing emotions by examining mind directly. In the sutra teachings, this profound nature is spoken of as *dharmata* or "nature of phenomena." In the context of mantra, it is called *sem* ("mind-nature").

It is just this nature of phenomena or mind's nature that is to be known. One must understand this through hearing and thinking about it. Nevertheless, ordinary people are not able to realize it directly. What is the reason for that? One is obstructed by conventional appearances. Due to conventional appearances one is not able to realize the dharma-nature or mind-nature. If one is able to realize this profound nature, then one will naturally separate from these confused, concealing or conventional sorts of appearances. Thus, this text, the *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata,* is devoted to identifying and distinguishing just exactly what the conventional appearances or *conventional truth* are, and just exactly what the *ultimate truth* (the nature of phenomena or the ultimate enduring condition)[9] is. So, this treatise is extremely important for those who wish to practice the meditations of mahamudra and dzogchen.

This book, *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata,* was composed many generations ago. For that reason, if one just picks it up and tries to understand it, it can be difficult to understand. After all, it is rather dissimilar from the kinds of books that we are familiar with in the present time and this makes it difficult to understand. However, given that the teaching was presented by a very great *bodhisattva*, it is not incomprehensible and there is great benefit from having understood it. Rather, if we put forward exertion and approach it with longing and respect, then we can indeed understand it. In particular, those in Western countries have trained from a very young age in a variety of studies and have developed their intelligence and ability to reason well. Therefore, you will be able to understand this text clearly. Having understood it clearly and having developed confidence in what you have understood, if you then bring that into the practice of meditation, it will be of great benefit.

Understanding this text will be beneficial to those who have not yet given birth to meditation by arousing a desire to meditate. For

those who have already given birth to meditation, it will help to give certainty and confidence, and knowledge and stability in the meditation. For those who already have these qualities, it will allow these qualities to increase. Therefore, from whatever point of view you approach this teaching, it will be beneficial and extremely important.

B. THE HOMAGE

1c. To the guardian Maitreya we bow in supplication.

In the past the homage to shastras would be to the buddhas and bodhisattvas. If the text concerned the *Vinaya* or monastic discipline it would say, "I prostrate to the Omniscient One." With texts concerning the Abhidharma the homage would say, "I prostrate to the youthful Manjushri." However, later translators departed from this tradition and on this particular occasion, the homage is to Maitreya.

The expression of the homage is also related to the time in which this text was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. Although all five of the books of Maitreya appeared in the world at the same time (Asanga dates are the fourth century C.E.), *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata*, the root text of the *Uttara Tantra* and the *Commentary on the Uttara Tantra* composed by Asanga were concealed as treasures (Tib. *terma*). This was because their meaning was very profound and it was felt that these texts were not entirely suitable for the times. Later, Maitripa, who lived at about the same time as the great master Naropa (roughly the year 1000 C.E.), saw light issuing forth from a crack in a *stupa*. From that light he saw that there was something very special inside, so he pulled out these three texts. So, the these three texts were revealed by Maitripa and were thus widely disseminated in the world. These texts were brought to Tibet and were translated into Tibetan later than the earlier texts of Maitreya had been translated. So the homage is different from what is find in the translations of the other texts of Maitreya.

C. WHY THIS TEXT WAS WRITTEN

2. Something there is to be given up fully through knowing
And something else which can only be actualized
Because of which this treatise has been composed,
With the wish to distinguish the traits defining these.

Maitreya gives the reason for writing this text as by saying basically, "One must understand what is called 'that which possesses the quality' (or that which possesses the dharma)." The quality to which this refers is the dharmata itself, translated here as "subjects," but it means those which bear the quality of dharmata. "One must understand these subjects and also the dharmata." The subjects themselves are samsaric, confused appearance or samsaric confusion. They need to be abandoned. What is the method for abandoning such subjects? It is through recognizing and understanding the enduring condition, the true nature, or the way in which phenomena exist (Tib. *nge lug*). That must be known manifestly. Thus, it is for the purpose of abandoning confusion and realizing the non-confused state that this treatise has been composed.

One must understand the distinctive character of confused appearances and one must also understand the nature, the character, the conditions and the excellent qualities of dharmata. To do this, Maitreya gives this as the reason for having written his treatise by saying, "For this purpose I have composed this treatise."

Questions

Question: I don't understand what the words dharma and dharmata mean?

Rinpoche: If the word dharma were to be translated directly out of Sanskrit into Tibetan, then it would be translated into Tibetan with the word *zin po,* which means "to hold." The notion is to prevent one from falling down; it holds one up. As for the word that the translators settled upon for translating dharma, the word *chö* actually means "to fix something," "to repair something." One has various faults and the notion is that chö is what repairs them. We talk about the quality of the seed or the cause of samsara, it is the three poisons, which are desire, hatred and ignorance. The function or role of chö or dharma is to fix or repair or heal those particular problems. Is it possible to do so? Is it possible to fix-up, clear away or eliminate the hindrances, suffering, impediments and so forth? Yes, it is indeed possible to do so. It is possible to abandon desire, hatred and ignorance. How is such possible? We have at this point the various sorts of confusion or mistaken appearances. However, it is our good fortune that we can understand that these are in fact not true, that mistaken appearances and confusion are not the truth of the matter. We can know that, we can understand that, we can realize that. In fact, we can realize the actual nature, the true nature, the

enduring condition of things. It is in that context that one speaks of dharmata, the true nature of things.

Question: The five texts of Maitreya are divided into Mind-only and Madhyamaka school. Where does this text fit in and what is the characteristic to put it into that category?

Rinpoche: There are many different ways of explaining the five books of Maitreya in terms of the various philosophical schools in the Indian Buddhist tradition. Some say that all five books are texts of the Mind-only school. Some say that *The Ornament for Clear Realization* is a text of the Middle-way or Madhyamaka school and that the other four are texts of the Mind-only or Chittamatra school. Some say that the *The Ornament for Clear Realization* and the *Uttara Tantra* are texts of the Middle-way (Skt. Madhyamaka) school and that the other three are texts of the Mind-only (Skt. Chittamatra) school. So, there are a great many ways of talking about this. However, in terms of joining this to meditation and practice, it is necessary to settle appearances, to resolve that appearances are just mind and that mind itself is empty and to realize emptiness in meditation. Even if one's view is that of the Madhyamaka school, it is nevertheless necessary to settle such appearances as being just mind. If one were then to say that this mind, that this stuff of these appearances were truly existent or truly established, then that would be the view of the Chittamatra school. However, there isn't any place in the five books of Maitreya where it is said that this mind, having settled that all appearances are just mind, that then says that this mind is truly existent or truly established. Thus, from that point of view it can be said that all of them are texts of the Middle-way school and in particular, from among them, *The Uttara Tantra* and this text, *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata*, present the view of the *Shentong* or Empty-of-other school in that they teach the *sugatagarbha*, "the essence of the one gone to bliss."

My experience in talking about the dharma with people, in giving presentations and explanations on topics of the dharma, is that sometimes I am able to answer people's questions adequately and sometimes I am not. Sometimes I can help to clear away people's doubts about things and sometimes I am not able to do so. So, when you ask questions and if I am able to answer them properly, I will do so to the best of my ability and if I am not able to answer them properly, then I will just have to say, "Well, I'm sorry. I just don't know right now." For that reason we could extend the discussions a little bit and bring up whatever questions you have. Sometimes people think that because they have a tough and hard

question, it wouldn't be suitable to ask. They think, "I shouldn't ask because it is a very tough question." That's not true. If you have a tough question, then please ask it and I will answer as best as I can. Some people think that because they have a tiny question that they should not ask it. They think, "I shouldn't ask because it is such a silly question." That's not true either. Whatever questions you have, please ask them and I will answer them as best as I can. I will tell you whatever I know.

Question: I would like to know how Maitripa got the mind teaching from this?

Rinpoche: What Maitripa found was an actual book, a text. It was neither something offered to him by the dakinis nor was it a mind treasure. Between sutra and mantra, at this point we are discussing the view taught within the tradition of sutra and therefore the uncommon, miraculous displays of the mantra tradition do not come into play. Maitripa discovered these texts by way of direct knowledge or clairvoyance and by way of having a karmic relationship with it, just because he was a very fortunate person.

Question: Was it Maitreya himself who wrote this text?

Rinpoche: No, it was Asanga.

Table 1

The Five Works of Maitreya

1. *The Ornament of Mahayana Discourses* (Skt. *mahayana-sutra-lamkara*, Tib. *theg pa chen po mdo sde rgyan*). This work consists of twenty-one chapters and is written in verse. It covers a discussion of Buddha-nature, refuge in the three jewels, the mahayana paths, and the doctrine of emptiness.
2. *The Ornament of Clear Realization* (Skt. *abhisamayalamkara*, Tib. *mngon rtogs rgyan*). This work is a verse commentary on the Prajnaparamita literature (which comes in the 100,000 and in 25,000, and in 8,000 verses) and like that literature is divided into eight vajra topics. This text is studied in all four Tibetan lineages and is used in the study of the sutra system.
3. *Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes* (Skt. *madhyantavibhaga*, Tib. *dbus mtha' rnam 'byed*). This work is a commentary expounding primarily on the Chittamatra school of Buddhism, especially the Shentong school. The text explores eternalism and nihilism and why these are not part of the middle way.
4. *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* (Skt. *dharma-dharmata-vibhaga*, Tib. *chos dang chos nyid rnam 'byed*). This is a commentary on the tathagatagarbha doctrine and the Chittamatra school of thought.
5. *The Uttara Tantra* (Skt. *uttaratantra shastra*, Tib. *rgyud bla ma*). This work is written in verse and has seven vajra points. It is mainly a commentary on the three jewels, the seed of Buddha-nature which is inherent in all sentient beings, and the attributes and activities of the Buddha. It particularly deals with the subject of Buddha-nature and the development of the realization of the nature of phenomena through the purification of the disturbing emotions.

Chapter 2

The Brief Presentation of the Text

II. THE BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE TEXT
A. THE DEFINITION OF DHARMA AND DHARMATA

3. A summary of everything in brief
Should be known to include the following two motifs:
Since everything can be summarized fully in terms
Of phenomena and likewise pure being.

4. That which is classified here as phenomena
Comprises samsara; phenomena's pure being
Is classified most precisely as nirvana.
As this is defined by the vehicles, which are three.[10]

This treatise introduces a topic by giving a brief overview of the subject and then it gives a more detailed description of the same topic. We begin this chapter with the brief overview and then give the detailed characteristics of dharma, which is our conventional perception of the world we live in.

Addressing the topic of dharma and dharmata is extremely vast, with the word "dharma" meaning "phenomena" but in this text it refers to all confused samsaric appearances. The word "dharmata" also means "phenomena" but it also refers to the nature of all of these phenomena, which is how they truly are.[11] Therefore, there is nothing that is not included within these two: dharma and dharmata. On the one hand, dharma refers to all worldly, samsaric appearances, to the way that things appear, and dharmata refers to the way in which they actually are or abide. Therefore, if we can realize both the manner of appearance and the manner of abiding, we have realized everything.

Some scholars have illustrated how things appear and how they actually abide by using an example of a rope that is mistaken for a snake. If we see a rope in a dark room and believe that this rope is a snake, we then become frightened and confused, thinking, "It will bite me and if it bites me, then I may die. I am in a lot of trouble." However, there is no need to be afraid because there isn't really a

snake there. Nevertheless, thinking that there is a snake, we become frightened and we suffer. So what would be the method for helping relieve the suffering in this particular instance? We might look for a weapon or an antidote for snakebite. But, in fact, those solutions don't help at all because the solution is to simply realize that it is not a snake. If we understand that it is not a snake but a rope, then we will no longer be afraid, we will no longer suffer, and all those problems will be solved.

Similarly, in cyclic existence (Skt. *samsara*), which is dharma, we sometimes experience suffering and other times joy. We may experience bodily suffering of illness or experience the mental suffering of unhappiness. Whatever our suffering, we experience the suffering of impermanence. We might think that the proper method to eliminate such suffering is to eliminate impermanence. However, that is not the best way to go about it. The best way to go about eliminating the suffering of samsara is to understand that these phenomena are not solid and real in their own nature; they do not exist inherently.

How then do we understand the way in which phenomena actually exist? It is through realizing dharmata, in which phenomena actually rest. What we mean by dharmata is the *nirvana* of the three vehicles (the hinayana, the mahayana, and the vajrayana). The Tibetan word for "nirvana" is literally "passed beyond suffering." Realizing dharmata, we understand the true manner things or phenomena and that is the method for clearing away the suffering of samsara. That is like realizing that a rope is not a snake.

B. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DHARMA AND DHARMATA

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DHARMA

5. Here the traits of phenomena are defined
As duality and equivalent formulation,
The appearance of which is mistaken interpretation;
Since what appears is not, it could not be true.
No referents have ever existed either,
And being but concept consist in interpretation.

Dharmas are the various apparent phenomena and confused appearances of samsara which bring with them a great deal of difficulty and hardship. However, we are extremely fortunate because we can abandon these appearances. Because such samsaric appearances are not real, we can realize dharmata. By realizing

dharmata it is possible to abandon the problems, hardships, and suffering of samsara.

There are three definitive characteristics of samsaric phenomena. First, the perceived and the perceiver are separate making dualistic appearance. In relation to such, various sorts of verbal expressions and, in terms of what appears to one's mind, imaginary phenomena make up what we mean by the Tibetan term *chö jin* or "subjects," which are *conventional truths* (Tib. *kunzop denpa*).

We see such conventional truths; however they do not exist the way that we perceive them. Their appearance is not correct. Rather, these phenomena are just our own mental activity of what is called "mind only" (Tib. *sem tsam*). There are in fact no objects; there is just this mental activity. This refers to conceptual activity and non-conceptual sense consciousness. What is being said is that it is not an appearance of objects; it is just mental activity.

The Four Schools of Buddhism

The Buddha taught in stages and so various philosophical schools have come about. There are in particular four major schools of the mahayana. The first is the *Vaibhashika* school or Great-exposition school, which is associated with the *shravakas*. The second is *Sautrantika* or Sutra school. The third is the *Chittamatra* or Mind-only school. The fourth school is known as the *Madhyamaka* or Middle-way school. The Buddha taught the philosophical view in these stages and if we proceed in these stages, we can understand that appearances are just mind and that mind itself has no inherent existence.

Buddha said that it is like going up a staircase; one has to go the first step, then the second step, and then the third step. If we were to try to jump from the bottom of the staircase to the top, that would not be possible. Similarly, if we were to say to beginners, "All things are just emptiness," they wouldn't be able to realize it or develop any conviction of that statement. If We were to say to beginners, "The Buddha's wisdom dwells in all sentient beings" or "All appearances are just of the nature of mind," they wouldn't understand it, they wouldn't be able to realize it quickly, and they wouldn't develop a conviction of its truth rapidly. Therefore, the Buddha taught in a different way by saying that a person is a collection of many different aggregates or parts, that external phenomena are also collections of many different things; not being a single, solid object. External appearances, then, are just a collection of many very tiny small particles that we could call "atoms." They

would say internal consciousnesses are a collection of indivisible moments of mind. These first two schools, the Vaibhashika and Sautrantika, say that the minute particles and irreducible moments of mind are truly existent. It is through a collection of such inseparable particles or a continuum of such irreducible moments of mind that the gross phenomena that we ordinarily apprehend come about. It is only through a continuum that, for instance, something such as a year or a month comes about. There is no large, hard thing that exists in the way in which things ordinarily appear.

There are various differences between the Vaibhashika and Sautrantika schools, but their view is the same. Both hold that apparent and gross phenomena are, in fact, merely collections of truly existent indivisible particles and truly existent irreducible moments of mind. The important point of this view is that ordinarily we apprehend coarse or gross phenomena and this viewpoint shows this is a great mistake. If we are able to realize that phenomena are not the massive, solid things that they appear to be, then that is the first step on the staircase.

If we are able to understand this particular presentation, to meditate upon it, and to truly realize it, then we will abandon a great many faults and achieve a great many of good qualities. However, we must go further than that. The second step on the staircase is to understand that all appearances are just mind and this was emphasized by the third; the Mind-only school or tradition. The Buddha himself said that phenomena are just mind[12] and when this was explained clearly and in detail by various learned scholars who made this argument in terms of two logical arguments. The first is a refutation of external phenomena. The second is a demonstration that external phenomena are, in fact, internal mind.

Why External Phenomena are Empty

In the first analysis of the first two schools, we have understood that what appears to be coarse, external phenomena are really just a collection of very tiny, subtle particles gathered together. If we pursue that sort of analysis, we would have to come to the point of saying that the tiny particles themselves are not composed of parts; that they are irreducible or indivisible phenomena. However, if we investigate this claim carefully, we discover that there is no such thing as a smallest indivisible particle. We could hypothesize the existence of indivisible particles, but, in fact, there is no such thing. Therefore, the way in which such massive and gross phenomena come about is not through the collection of a great many very tiny

particles, rather it is just the coming about through appearing for our own internal mind.[13]

There are two logical reasons used to explain why external phenomena are, in fact, just appearances of the mind. The first is called "luminous knowledge." If we consider various external phenomena such as a mountain or a chair or a thimble, we feel that the object exists. We do this because we can see it. It is merely the seeing of something that leads us to feel, think, and believe that it exists. There is no other way to establish or to prove the existence of something. For instance, if we think that a particular mountain exists, we say, "Well, I saw it and that's why I think so." If we ask someone else, "Why do you think that such a thing exists?" All they can answer is, "Well, I saw it. That's all." It's just an appearance for one's mind. Consider the stupa outside this monastery.[14] We think it exists. Why do we think that it exists? We believe this because we see it. We see it because it appears to our mind. There is no way to demonstrate the existence of something that has not appeared to our mind. There is no way to demonstrate the existence of something without its appearing to mind. Therefore, external phenomena and internal mind are inseparable.

Similarly, if we hear a sound, we think that the sound exists. Why do we think that sound exists? "Because I heard it," is our answer. Is there an unheard sound? No, there isn't. Thus, whether we talk about visible images, sounds that are apprehended by our ear, smells apprehended by our nose, or various tastes that are tasted by our tongue, it is only because of their appearing to our mind that we think that they exist. Thus, external things are just internal mind. Therefore, these external appearances are just our internal mind. They are not truly established as what they appear to be. The main point at this juncture is that appearances are just appearances for mind.[15]

When we distinguish the Middle-way (Skt. Madhyamaka) school from the Mind-only (Skt. Chittamatra) school, we say that the view of the Mind-only is lower than that of the Middle-way school. The reason is that the Mind-only school believes that while all appearances are created by mind, that mind itself truly exists. So, from that consideration, the view of the Mind-only school is inferior to the Middle-way school. Nevertheless, the view set forth in the context of the Mind-only school is very important because it is able to settle precisely that appearances are just mind. There is an important practical purpose for establishing this fact. For instance, when one practices mahamudra or dzogchen meditation, one needs to realize the mind as it really is. If one has not understood that

external appearances are actually just one's mind, then realizing the mind's way of existing is not of any great benefit.[16] Therefore, the arguments presented by the Mind-only school are that external phenomena are just mind is of great importance and benefit.

The demonstration that external phenomena are just the mind is very important in the practice of mahamudra and dzogchen meditation. In fact, it is the root of all meditation; it is extremely helpful for all meditation because it allows us to see the great importance of mind. If mind were not itself important, then meditation on mind would not be particularly important or helpful. It is like misunderstanding a rope for a snake. If it really were a snake and we thought, "It's not a snake. It's a rope," then no matter how much we thought it wasn't a snake when it bites us it would not be of much good. Similarly, the fact that external appearances are really just our mind means that there is a great value and benefit to understanding the mind's true way of existing.

2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DHARMATA

6. Moreover, being as such is here defined
As being the suchness in which there is no division
Between there being perceiver as well as perceived,
A signifier as well as a signified.

In the previous chapter discussing dharma, we saw that the various mistaken appearances of samsara seem to be external phenomena, but that they are not actually external things, but merely appearances to mind. If external things actually existed as solid outside objects, then there would be no internal consciousnesses to accurately apprehend these phenomena. For instance, if there were actually some patch of blue existing externally, then there would be an internal consciousness apprehending that patch of blue accurately as an external phenomenon. If, on the other hand, there is no such thing as an external color blue, then there is no internal consciousness apprehending as such. If we apply this more vastly, the same is true with regard to forms, sounds, and everything else. In this way, if the phenomena that seem to be external and that are apprehended by consciousness were, in fact, not external phenomena, then similarly the internal consciousness is not valid.

In that way, the lack of solid external phenomena indicates similarly the lack of valid establishment of internal conscious-nesses that apprehends external phenomena. Furthermore, this applies to the words that are used to express and name various phenomena and

it applies to those phenomena that receive such names. As it says quite literally, "those which express" and "those which are expressed" or "the signifier" and "that which is signified." So, the relationship between objects and words is similarly shown to be one in which there is no difference between the two in the manner that there seems to be. In this way, from among the four major philosophical schools (the Vaibhashika, Sautrantika, Chittamatra and Madhyamaka) we are coming to the view of the Middle-way or Madhyamaka school. This school holds that all phenomena (external phenomena and internal mind) lack inherent existence and do not have any nature of their own.[17] In this way, the conventional and ultimate status of phenomena is demonstrated.

C. THE RATIONALE FOR THIS DISTINCTION

7. Because what does not exist appears, delusion
Provides the cause for completely afflicted states,
As things like illusory elephants appear;
Hence, even what does appear does not appear.

Clearly, there are appearances of visual forms, sounds, odors and so forth that appear in the mind. Are these nothing whatsoever? No, phenomena do appear. But these appearances are of things, which do not exist, they are appearances of non-existing phenomenon. Because appearances are based on non-existent phenomena, the appearance is false or incorrect. The true nature of phenomena is impermanent, but it appears to be solid and unchanging and permanent. So in this regard phenomena are also false or mistaken. Since such appearances are mistaken or confused, they are the cause of *disturbing emotions*[18] (Skt. *kleshas*) which are called afflictions here. As the cause of afflictions, they are the cause of suffering because disturbing emotions are what cause our suffering in life.

Even though phenomena do not exist, nevertheless they do appear. As Buddha says in the *Heart Sutra* "Form is emptiness," i.e. forms lack a nature of their own or inherent existence. Does that mean that forms are utterly non-existent? No, because it then says, "Emptiness is form," i.e. emptiness itself appears as form. This is like the way in which a magician may conjure up an illusion of an elephant or we might give the example of an elephant appearing in our dream which really appears to us, but obviously there is no real elephant in the room while we are dreaming. So, even though

appearances do not exist, nevertheless they do appear. In just this way, appearances dawn on the conventional level.

8. If either the lack of existence or the appearance
Were missing, delusion and being free of delusion
and likewise states afflicted in every respect
And thorough refinement would be unjustified.

Although they do not exist, various conventional phenomena do appear; therefore they are just confusion. And since these appearances are just confusion, it is possible to see through this confusion and achieve Buddhahood. In other words, it then is possible to realize the actual nature of phenomena and to meditate and achieve Buddhahood.

If, on the other hand, phenomena truly existed, then afflictions and mistaken appearances would not be mistaken or false. If they truly existed as solid real objects, then there would be no impermanence or gradual change within appearance and then it would not be possible to achieve nirvana or Buddhahood. If appearances were real, there would be no realization of some correct nature that was opposite to this mistaken appearance. If there would be no realization of a true nature of phenomena, it would not be possible to achieve nirvana. Therefore, if phenomena were truly established, there would be neither samsara nor nirvana.

D. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DHARMA AND DHARMATA

9. These two are not one and the same nor do they differ
Because between that which exists and that which does not
A distinction exists and also does not exist.

The root text next discusses the relationship between dharma and dharmata, asking whether they are one nature or different natures. In fact, they are neither one nature nor different natures.

First, we try to determine whether they are of the same nature. They are not of the same nature because conventional appearances are not inherently established; even though they appear in a certain way, they are not established in the way that they appear and therefore they are false. Dharmata, on the other hand, is true. Since the one is false and the other is true, they have a different character and are not of the same nature.

Then, if dharma and dharmata are not of the same nature, are they different? No, they are not different because dharmata is the mere non-existence of dharma. It is not some other "thing;" it is not something that exists somewhere else. It is not possible to have these various confused appearances in one place and dharmata (which is their way of existing) somewhere else and apart. Dharmata is the mere non-establishment of dharma in the way that dharmas seem to exist. Thus, these two, dharma and dharmata, are devoid of being either one nature or different natures.

Thus we have discussed the definitive characteristics of dharma and dharmata and the matter of whether or not they are of the same or different natures. Other texts discuss the egolessness of persons and the egolessness of phenomena in two points. However, it amounts to the same thing; these two ways of approaching the matter come down to the same meaning.

The Egolessness of the Individual

Buddha taught the selflessness or *egolessness of persons* (Tib. *dag me*) in the hinayana and the *egolessness of phenomena* in the mahayana. The Buddha presented of the egolessness of person in the hinayana for a particular reason. Sentient beings dwelling in samsara experience a great deal of suffering and they must understand this suffering in order to find release from suffering. However, the mere wish to abandon suffering is not sufficient. Rather, one needs to understand the causes of suffering which are karma and the disturbing emotions. People have become quite used to the causes of suffering and have established strong predispositions for engaging in the causes of suffering. We might think, "I am going to abandon suffering now. I am going to abandon hatred. I am going to abandon envy. I am going to abandon desire." In fact, it is not possible to simply do this. We can abandon suffering by abandoning the causes of suffering, which are the disturbing emotions. The cause of the disturbing emotions is the belief in a self.

It is possible to abandon the conception of self. The Buddha saw that the conception of self is a mistaken conception. If the self actually existed, it would not be possible to abandon it. However, this conception of self is false because, in fact, there is no self. We can arrive at this through analysis and reasoning and through a path of meditation. Once having understood the conception of self to be false, then it will naturally be overcome. For this reason, Buddha taught the person's lack of self first in the hinayana.

There are a great many non-Buddhist traditions that do not take this lack of a self into consideration. However, in Buddhism the lack of self is regarded as very important and are known as "the four seals" that mark a doctrine as being the word of the Buddha. Selflessness occupies a prominent place because by realizing selflessness, then the unpeaceful mind can be made peaceful and tamed. Therefore, the recognition and realization of selflessness is regarded as extremely important and is a distinctive feature of the Buddhist tradition.

There are two aspects for this conception of self: the conception of "I" and the conception of "mine." Of these two aspects of the conception of self the main erroneous belief is the perception of "I." However, it is easier to discuss the conception of mine. We all have a concept that certain things are "mine." For instance, sometimes we think, "my mind" and other times we think, "my body." At that point we have broadened the conception of "mine" to include our entire body. We can go on expanding this to include "my house" or "my land" or "my country." At other times these things are regarded as "not belonging to me," but as "belonging to someone else" such as this isn't my land. There is little stability to this concept of mine. For instance, if we are talking about Tibetans and Tibet, however much we might think, "my country," nevertheless we don't have control over it; it's not ours.

The conception of mine is a source of difficulty, suffering, and hardship. We could consider an example that here[19] there are a lot of stores selling vajras and bells. If we go into one shop where they sell a bell and we see a bell fall to the ground and break, we just think, "Oh, a bell fell to the ground and broke." However, if our own bell falls to the ground and breaks, then that is very painful. Why is there suffering in one example and no suffering in the other example? It simply leads back to whether or not one regards something as belonging to us or not. If we think that it is "mine," then there is suffering; if one thinks that this isn't "mine," then there is no suffering.

No matter how much we think of something as "mine," this is a false belief. Between the bell that fell on the floor in the store and our own bell that broke, there is really no difference. There is nothing inside or outside the bell that particularly makes it our bell. It is simply confusion in our mind and such confusion leads to suffering. Then to be free from such suffering, we have to realize that "mine" is really non-existent. Understanding the lack of any inherent reality of mine, then the power of our perception of mine

becomes weaker. As that conception becomes weaker, then our suffering decreases.

The conception of "mine" focuses upon one object and then upon another and thus the object of such a conception is extremely unstable. Similarly, the conception of "I" is unstable. Sometimes we think "I" in regard to our mind and sometimes we think "I" in regard to our body. When we are thinking "I" in regard to our mind, sometimes we think this in regard to all six consciousnesses and we sometimes think this only in regard to the sixth mental consciousness. In this way, the conception of "I" is not stable. Also, our body is a collection of many different material substances gathered together and we cannot point to one part and say this part is "I." Similarly, our mind is a collection of many different moments of consciousnesses. It is not just one thing. It is only through the collection of the sense of past, present, and future, which we think of the continuum of the mind over a period of time as "I." However, whether we look into the past, the present, or the future, we will not find any one thing as being a self. If we realize this lack of self, then our aggression, attachment, disturbing emotions of pride and jealousy will gradually diminish. So first, this lack of self needs to be known or understood; secondly, it must be meditated upon; and thirdly, it must be actually realized. When it has been realized, then the disturbing emotions will be abandoned.

The Selflessness of Dharmas (Phenomena)

The realization of the egolessness of self enables us to overcome the conception of a self of persons, whereby pacifying the disturbing emotions (Skt. *kleshas*). Next is the egolessness of dharma with the Sanskrit word "dharma" and the Tibetan word *chö* meaning many different things. One usage is for those things that are to be practiced, another is various objects of knowledge. In fact, the word "dharma" is used here for "all things" which we also call "phenomena."

In the context of the egolessness of dharmas, the dharmas are objects of knowledge, whether we are speaking about external phenomena (such as visible images and sounds) or internal phenomena (such as feelings and thoughts). All of these objects of knowledge are called "ḍharma." When we realize the person's lack of self, then we begin to eliminate the cause of suffering. When we realize the lack of self of the solidity of phenomena, then we can understand what suffering actually is. We see that these causes of suffering have no nature of their own. Through understanding that,

we see that they have no ability to harm us. Thus the Buddha taught the lack of inherent existence of phenomena in the second turning of the mahayana.

In the sutra tradition, the egolessness of phenomena is approached by the path of reasoning. It is presented in the context of the Middle-way (Skt. Madhyamaka) school and Mind-only (Skt. Chittamatra) school. As discussed before, the Mind-only school postulates that appearances are just mind. By recognizing that the appearances themselves are mistaken, we understand that the mind is also mistaken and thus the mind itself is no more inherently existent than the phenomena that appears to it. That is the way in which the egolessness of phenomena is presented by the Mind-only school. The Middle-way school approaches the egolessness of phenomena through investigation of the cause, through effect, and then through the very entity of phenomena, i.e. just what they are. In the sutra tradition of the Middle-way school, we proceed on a path of inference and arrive at what is known as "ascertaining consciousness." However, in the tradition of the vajrayana we do use the path of inference, but use the path of meditation. We meditate and this creates the experience of the emptiness of mind; and through this we are introduced to true nature of the mind. In this meditation, the egolessness of phenomena or dharmata appears and is understood and realized. Through realization the egolessness of phenomena (dharmata) we recognize phenomena as naturally (of their own accord) peaceful, pleasant, and liberated.

Questions

Question: Does the Vaibhashika school say that indivisible particles and irreducible moments have the same nature?
Rinpoche: Such is not held to be the case by the Vaibhashika or the great exposition school, rather the one, the indivisible particles, are external phenomena; they are material, atomic. Whereas the irreducible moments of consciousness are internal mind; they are luminous, clear awareness. These two are in the relationship of the object apprehended and the subject apprehending the object.
Question: Do the indivisible particles have the nature of material in the way that we understand them in the West?
Rinpoche: As we explained the other day, Buddha presented both the definitive meaning and the indicative meaning or a meaning that tends to lead one somewhere else. In Tibetan the definitive meaning is *ngedön* and the indicative meaning is *drangdön*. As definitive

meaning, we have the teachings of the mind-only and middle-way school. However, if teachings of the definitive meaning were presented to trainees at the beginning, it would be too much for them; they wouldn't understand. Therefore, Buddha taught beginners the way things appear to beginners. And the analysis, therefore, begins with studying the appearance of things as gross or coarse or rough phenomena, analyzing to see if they are indeed such and seeing that they probably aren't. One can then say, "No, that isn't really what they are. They are composed of parts and moments." So, Buddha began by teaching ordinary persons in accordance with the way that things appeared to ordinary persons. And the experience of ordinary persons is that what we are calling "mind" has the nature of knowledge and what we are calling "external phenomena" has the nature of being external, material, solid, obstructive stuff. In the Vaibhashika school, the relation between the perceiving consciousness and the perceived phenomena is that one thing looks directly at the other; the apprehended phenomena is that which is looked at and the apprehending consciousness or knower is that which looks directly, one at the other.

Question: You spoke about the two practices of mahamudra and dzogchen. I wonder what is dzogchen and how does it differ from mahamudra?"

Rinpoche: There isn't much of a difference. There is a difference in terms of the transmission or lineage through which the oral instructions have passed from teacher to student. The oral instructions of the dzogchen begin with the teacher Garab Dorje and passed to his student Shri Simha and so forth. The oral instructions of the mahamudra tradition begin with Tilopa, passed from Tilopa to Naropa and so forth. There are differences in terms of method and the quintessential instructions. However, in terms of when one is settling just that which is meditated upon, where does one look? Where does one meditate? One meditates upon the manner of abiding, particularly, the mind's manner of abiding and thus those who practice the tradition of dzogchen are led in terms of the mind and meditate upon the mind's way of abiding. Those who practice the tradition of mahamudra (the great seal) are led in terms of the mind and meditate upon the mind's true nature. For that reason, there is no difference in the thing, the meaning or the practice itself. There are differences in terms of the quintessential instructions by which the view is generated, but not in the thing itself. So, by way of the various differences in quintessential instructions, we speak about

the different traditions, the one of the great seal and the other of the great completeness.

Question: Is the one better than the other?

Rinpoche: I think that they are mostly the same.

Question: I didn't understand why the Mind-only school is lower than the Middle-way school?

Rinpoche: How does one settle the view in terms of the Middle-way school? It is through analyzing worldly, confused or mistaken appearance and understanding that such confused appearances are not inherently established. The word that the Middle-way school uses to describe this lack of inherent existence or lack of any nature of its own is "emptiness" or shunyata in Sanskrit. Thus, the middle-way school shows that all outer and inner phenomena to be empty of inherent existence. Nevertheless, such phenomena naturally appear to or for one's mind conventionally. The demonstration of all phenomena as lacking inherent existence is the particular tenet of the Middle-way school. All outer phenomena being appearances of mind is the view of the Mind-only school.

Question: The argument of the Mind-only which establishes that appearances are only mind is strange because this only seems to prove that we simply don't experience some things. There could be things that, in fact, we don't experience that don't appear for the mind and yet have existence. This argument does not address that. I apparently don't understand this argument. Would you explain it more carefully, please?

Rinpoche: You have to look very closely at the reason why you think that something that does not appear to one's mind exists. If you think that something that does not appear to one's mind exists, it has got to be either from the point of view of a correct sign of its existence or from the point of view of direct perception; those are the only two possibilities. You have to look very closely at the reason why you think that something that does not appear to one's mind nevertheless exists.

Question: But, what would be a correct sign? What exactly do you mean by that terminology?

Rinpoche: Sign means reason. You have to have a reason. What is the reason for thinking that something that has never appeared to anyone's mind exists?

Question: Rinpoche said that there are three definite characteristics of dharma. The first is the duality of the perceiver and the perceived. I am not sure whether today's lecture comes under that point or whether it is the second or third?

Rinpoche: In this chapter I spoke about the non-existence of apprehended and apprehender and the way that they seem to exist and about the appearance of apprehended and apprehender as two, about dualistic appearance and about the incorrectness of that appearance. So, we are in the first.
Question: Rinpoche said, 'I believe that all appearances are mind' but what about the cup of tea? I'm confused at this point.
Rinpoche: What is being said is that things are merely appearances to or for mind and not that they are made by mind in that way. Things are not an independent display. Like a reflection in a mirror, put something in front of a mirror and then there is a reflection or an appearance of that thing in a mirror. But, it is not just anything that appears in the mirror.
Question: So, there's no volition?
Rinpoche: No, it's not just because you want it. Therefore, one has to meditate. If it were a matter of what we wanted, then whenever things should run pleasant, we could say, "Let things be pleasant." It doesn't work that way.

Chapter 3

The Detailed Examination of Dharma

In this text we are examining the differences between dharma and dharmata. We now come to the discussion of the discussion of the characteristics of dharma or ordinary phenomena. This discussion is given in terms of discussion six aspects of dharma.

III. THE DETAILED EXPLANATION OF DHARMA
A. OVERVIEW

10. Because it provides a thorough introduction
To their characteristics as well as their rationale,
Their neither being the same nor different,
The ground in common and not in common shared,
And the lack of appearance involving perceiver-perceived,
This six-point approach to phenomena is the best.

This verse outlines the six aspects.

1. DEFINING TRAITS
2. THE RATIONALE
3. BEING NEITHER SAME NOR DIFFERENT

11. Of these the defining traits and the rationale,
Their neither being the same nor different
Are just as these were demonstrated in brief.

This verse says that the first three aspects have already been discussed in the previous chapter and won't be discussed further. These three aspects were: (1) the definitive character of dharma and dharmata, (2) the nature which is mistaken, and (3) the question of whether or not dharmas and dharmata are identical or different.

4. THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD

12. As long as there is someone circling somewhere
These are the grounds in each and every case —
The constituents of beings and that of the vessel;
The constituents of the vessel seem to be shared,
The awareness being the common experience;
The constituents of sentient beings are shared
In common as well as not in common shared.

The next topic is where are sentient beings born, where do they dwell, and why do they continue to revolve within samsara or cyclic existence. This topic has two aspects: the *elements* (Skt. *dhatu*) of sentient beings and the elements of the world that serve as the vessel. First of all, if we are speaking about the elements of sentient beings, we are considering mind and the individuality of sentient beings. When we are considering the external elements, we are interested in questions such as where sentient beings are born, where they live and so forth. As for that external vessel that sentient beings inhabit, although there are slight differences for the individual mind of each sentient being, generally speaking it's more or less identical, i.e. the way in which a mountain appears to someone is the same for different people.

A. THE COMMON ASPECT

13. Further, birth and conventions, to nurture, subdue,
Benefit, harm, and qualities, faults are each
Mutually caused by way of an interchange,
Because of which these are experiences shared in common.

What is common to different sentient beings is a matter of birth, of the activities of body and speech, work, conversation, discussion, helping or harming someone, the development of good qualities or faults. Some matters are not accomplished by one sentient being alone, but rather it is accomplished through the interaction of a variety of sentient beings. For instance, for a sentient being to be born we need three people—the mother, father and the person who is born.[20] In this way, a shared or common appearance comes about. With regard to the activities of body and speech, the work that one does physically is done in common with others. As for speech, it requires someone who is speaking and someone who is listening. As

for helping or doing harm, one needs at least two individuals making this a shared or mutual experience.

B. THE UNCOMMON ASPECT

14. Since the ground and awareness, happiness, suffering,
Action, transition at death, captivity, birth,
And liberation are not observed in common
They make up the ground which is not in common shared.

As for uncommon states we are discussing that which appears only for oneself alone. The two topics here are source and consciousnesses.

5. THE SOURCE
A. THE ALAYA CONSCIOUSNESS

15. What appear to be outer, perceivable in common
Are perceiving awareness; there are no referents
16. Existing as something extrinsic to consciousness
Because these are only experienced as common.

When we say "the source" what we mean is the *alaya consciousness* serves as the basis or source for all appearances. When one asserts appearances to be mind, one is not saying that, for instance that when one is inside a particular building, that nothing else exists. One is not saying that such things do not exist because they cannot appear in our mind. Rather when we go somewhere else, that suitability for appearances to dawn resides as latencies or predispositions within each individual person's mind-basis of all (Skt. *alaya vijnana* Tib. *kungshi nampar shepa*). When we go somewhere else, it is suitable for such things to appear because we have predispositions or latencies such that such appearances can indeed come about; then in fact they do and they will at that point appear as objects for one's own consciousnesses.[21]

B. THE OTHER CONSCIOUSNESSES

17. The counterpart is the one in which what is perceived
Is not shared in common, awareness's referent being
The minds and so on associated with other
Which do not comprise an object of mutual exchange
For perceiving awareness, not resting nor resting poised,

Because, for those not resting in equipoise
It is but their own conceptions which appear,
And because, for those who are resting in equipoise
It is its faithful reflection which appears
As the object encountered when into samadhi absorbed.

Next the text discusses the other seven consciousnesses. At this point we are certain that appearances are just appearances for mind. The word "minds" in the third line refers to the eight consciousnesses with the eighth alaya consciousness being the basis for the other seven consciousnesses.

The first consciousness is called the "eye consciousness" which sees various visible forms (the objects size, color, texture, shape and so forth). This comes about because of the eye sense-power. Similarly, because of an ear sense-power, various sorts of sounds are heard by the ear consciousness. This applies to the third olfactory consciousness that perceives various odors. These are perceived on dependence upon a nose sense-power. The tongue sense-power, allows various tastes to be perceived by a fourth tongue consciousness. Fifth, various tangible objects (some smooth, some rough, some painful and so forth) are experienced by the body consciousness because of the body sense-power.

It is said that the consciousnesses operate by way of the five doors with the five doors being the five sensory organs. The five sense consciousnesses are non-conceptual consciousnesses so that the eye consciousness, for example, doesn't think about the past or present, rather it apprehends the visual object as it exists right now. It doesn't think the object is good or bad; it just sees clearly. Similarly, the other five sense consciousnesses do not evaluate the past or future; accept or reject things as being good or bad. They simply see what exists right now. Our misperception of outer appearances is not really due to some defect in the five sensory consciousnesses. What is greatly mistaken in our perception is the sixth mental consciousness. The mental consciousness is conceptual and thinks about the past, the present, and the future; it thinks about whether things are good or bad; and replaces external sensory information with names and labels. For instance, the mental consciousness doesn't produce a vivid perceptual image when a name of a person is mentioned; rather a general form and name of that person just appears to this consciousness upon hearing the name. Thus it is called "a conceptual consciousness that apprehends the sound and the object in a manner of mixing them together." When we say that the sound and the object are mixed, we mean that

the label and the meaning are combined or the name of something and the thing itself appear in a mixed fashion. For instance, for the bell in front of me, the name "bell" is not an inherent part of the thing in front of me; it is just a name that is given to the object. However, the mental consciousness apprehends the image of the object I see and the label "bell" is mixed with it.

The seventh consciousness is the afflicted consciousness (Skt. *klesha-mana* Tib. *nyön yid*). It is not strongly afflicted by disturbing emotions; it is just not clear. The nature of this seventh consciousness is to conceive something as self. It does this in a twofold way. First of all, the sixth consciousness conceives self, thinking "I." It thinks so in a very clear way. However, the sixth consciousness is not stable. It thinks about other things. It goes here and there and gets involved with all kinds of different objects and when it is involved with other sorts of things, it is not thinking "I," and it forgets about self. However, whether or not we are thinking directly about self, we never forget self; the conception of self is always there. This is because the mental consciousness operates with the seventh consciousness that is always conceiving self.

The first seven consciousnesses operate in conjunction with the eighth alaya consciousness. These eight consciousnesses are appearances only for one's self; they do not appear for others. Therefore they are uncommon appearances or states.

The Feelings

Another uncommon state of sentient beings would be various feelings, such as those of pleasure and pain or happiness and suffering that occur in body and mind. Generally speaking, there are three different types of feelings: pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings, and neutral feelings. In terms of a mind, there is first a pleasant feeling (such as joy, admiration or liking for something) and the unpleasant mental feeling of something as disagreeable and unattractive. Thirdly, one might experience something as neither pleasant nor unpleasant, but just have a sort of in-between feeling. Similarly, the body has three feelings: those of pleasure, those of pain and a neutral feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful. We can also categorize these feelings into five groups: pleasant feelings as one; displeasure as the second and, pleasure and pain for body as three and four, and then a neutral feeling of body or of mind as the fifth type of feeling. These feelings are uncommon appearances because they are not shared with or by other sentient beings.

We say that all phenomena are "just mind" and there are two types of appearances of mind: those that are shared with others, and those that are not shared with others. Uncommon or unshared appearances would include the unpleasurable feelings associated with death, birth, and all the personal feelings we perceive in samsara.

Common appearances are like mountains and buildings. Unshared appearances are much easier to understand than shared appearances because we think that common appearances really exist as external phenomena. However, they do not exist apart from our own mind and thus the text teaches that they are not external phenomena.

What is the reason why such common appearances are said to be "just mind"? The way in which such apparently common appearances are seen is that they appear to the individual mind of individual sentient beings. That which appears for one's own mind is not known by others and that which appears to or for the minds of others is not known by oneself. So, although the appearance is similar, it is not something that can be known by another person in the way that it is known by oneself. And except for just this similarity, it is not actually the same.

A Practical Exercise

Today is a day when people are very worried and anxious because there is the great danger of a war breaking out in Nepal. So, considering the experience of pain, pleasure, and a neutral feeling, let us meditate for a while. The way in which we will meditate at this point is called "meditation having the observation of pleasure and pain and neutral feeling." We imagine all sentient beings in front of us and through the medium of the breath, we visualize our own happiness to be replaced with the suffering of others. At this juncture, the main point is understanding that the disturbing emotions of attachment, hatred, pride and so forth are the cause and the effect is fear. So as one's breath goes out, one imagines that light rays are love and compassion and go forth and strike other sentient beings. Those sentient beings then experience love and compassion and the absence of fear. Light rays return to oneself on the in-breath and with that breath, one draws in the fear and the disturbing emotions of others, such that they become free from such fear and disturbing emotions.

We said that all appearances are mind with there being common or shared appearances among sentient beings and unshared

appearances. It is easy to understand that the uncommon appearances are just mind. However, it is more difficult to understand that external phenomena, the common shared appearances, those phenomena that appear to be shared, are just mind. It is difficult to generate certainty and a knowledgeable understanding of that easily and quickly. There is no fault in not being able to do that easily and quickly. When I first began to study, I had difficulty with this point.

6. CLEARING AWAY DOUBTS

18. If what appears as perceived does not exist,
Then what appears as perceiver does not exist;
Due to this there is also a rationale
Behind the breakthrough to freedom from all appearance
Of perceived and perceiver; because without beginning
A volatile state prevails; since duality's
Not existing at all is what really exists.

External Appearances in the Four Schools

Previously, we discussed the views of the four different schools (the Vaibhashika, the Sautrantika, the Chittamatra, and the Madhyamaka). When I spoke about that I did not explain the views of the Vaibhashika and Sautrantika schools very clearly.

The Vaibhashika school holds that external phenomena are aggregations of particles and those aggregations of particles make up the objects that are perceived by consciousnesses. The internal consciousnesses are generated based upon the sense powers, such that the internal consciousness looks at and sees an external phenomenon. In this way we have a presentation of something inside that looks at and perceives something outside, which in general accords with the common way of thinking.

The Sautrantika point of view on this matter is different. They point out that the internal consciousnesses have a nature of *luminous clarity* (Tib. *salwa*)[22] and awareness, whereas external phenomena have a nature or character of being material and thus the definitive character of the two is extremely different. Since their character is so different, it is not that one thing looks directly at another; rather the external object serves as a cause and the internal consciousness is the effect of that cause. The relationship between cause and effect is that they are not simultaneous, rather the cause goes before and the effect comes later. Therefore, the object and the consciousness that

perceives the object don't occur simultaneously, but rather their relationship is that the cause is said to be the benefit or and the effect is said to be that which is benefited.

So, in this way the perceived object and the consciousness have the aspect of cause and effect. In the first moment, the object and the internal sense-power aggregate meet; in the second moment, the internal knowing consciousness is generated in the aspect of the object. In that way, the consciousness and the object do not actually meet directly.

In the Sautrantika school's way of explaining the process of perception, the appearance itself is explained as an appearance of mind. However, the cause of the appearance is said to be the external, material phenomena that have the nature of being established as particles. In their explanation, the appearance is an appearance for individual consciousnesses, for individual mind. Then the Mind-only school goes a step further and says, if there were in fact no particles serving as a basis for it, then that would be fine.

Between the Vaibhashika view and the Chittamatra view there is the school known as the Sautrantika, which explains the way in which appearances are merely mental phenomena. This serves as an intermediate step that is somewhat easier to understand.

External Appearances are Just Mind

The objection is raised to the argument that ourter phenomena and mind are different natures is that it is possible for one person to apprehend the mind of another person directly, and that when one person apprehends another mind directly, it is not a case of apprehending something that is just an appearance of one's own mind.[23] This is an example for the apprehension of something that is not an appearance of one's own mind.

The response to this argument is that we are talking about the perception of another's mind within meditation and in the other case we are talking about the perception of anther's mind not within meditation. When not in meditation and perceiving another person's mind is a case of one's own thought appearing in the aspect of another person's mind. The perception of another person's mind in meditation is when one perceives another person's mind through the force of one's own meditative stabilization and that the other person's mind appears as a reflection. The reflection of another's mind appears in an aspect that is similar to it. So, it is an

apprehension of the reflection or likeness of another person's mind, not a case of seeing another person's mind directly.

Internal Events are Also Empty

The discussion then proceeds to demonstrating the emptiness of internal consciousnesses and reviews the argument given before that the emptiness of the external phenomenon entails the emptiness of internal consciousness. For example, if there is a spot of blue, then a consciousness apprehending that spot of blue is produced. If there is no external spot of blue, then no such consciousness of the blue spot will be generated. In this way, the generation of an internal consciousness is shown to be dependent upon the external phenomenon. So if there is no external phenomenon, then there is no internal consciousness. so if we establish external phenomena to be empty, then internal phenomena must also be empty. In this way, one becomes to realize the nature of phenomena or what is called dharmata.

Not recognizing the emptiness of phenomena is the cause of suffering. If one has a strong belief in external phenomena, this leads one to regard external phenomena as either good or bad. If one feels that the external phenomena are good, then one develops strong attachment to this external phenomena. If one regards external phenomena as bad, then one develops a strong aversion to them. This leads to further suffering. However, if one understands that external phenomena are not solid from the very first, then both the cause of suffering and the resulting suffering will be naturally pacified.

Questions

Question: Rinpoche made two logical arguments and I was unable to follow them, although I heard what he said. If a patch of blue really existed, then necessarily the internal consciousness would exist. Maybe you could say something about that?

Rinpoche: If blue exists, then there is a consciousness apprehending blue. If form exists, then there is a consciousness apprehending form. If the object that is apprehended is true, then the consciousness apprehending that object will be true. However, if the object (let us say a form) is not a true object, then the consciousness apprehending it similarly will not be a true consciousness. That conventional, deceptive consciousness is not something that is true. It has to do

with the relationship between the perceived or apprehended and the perceiver or apprehending consciousness. In Tibetan they are linked quite closely, saying that one is object and the perceiving consciousness is called "the object possessor," indicating the relationship between the two. If the object is false, then that which bears the object similarly is false. Does that make it clear?

Question: Yes, but why is the apprehending consciousness necessarily false?

Rinpoche: If the seed or cause is true, then the effect or result will be true. If the seed is false, then the fruit will similarly be false. In this case, since the object is false, then its result or its fruit, the perceiving or apprehending subject, is similarly false.

Question: We all have the same true nature, which is dharmata. At the same time we are part of phenomena. We have no self, but at the same time we create our own individual karma. Why is this?

Rinpoche: We speak about what is called "the way or manner of abiding" and "the way of confusion" or "the way of error." As for the way of abiding, there is no self; there is neither a self of persons nor a self of phenomena. However, in the way of confusion, one is confused about persons and about phenomena, thinking that there is a self of persons and a self of phenomena. In that way, within confusion one becomes involved in various sorts of actions and creates various situations of happiness and suffering. However, this is taking place within confusion. For instance, in a dream one might dream an elephant or dream a horse and become frightened or become delighted. Is there actually an elephant or is there actually such a horse? Well, in terms of the way in which things abide, there is no elephant, there is no horse. But in terms of the way in which they appear, most certainly, one does dream an elephant or a horse and there is an appearance of elephant and horse. So, in the context of waking life, there are various sorts of actions and there are various effects or fruits of actions. Do such actions and their result dawn or appear? Yes, they certainly do. Are they true? No, they are not true. Will we realize their lack of truth in the future? Yes, most definitely.

Question: In the way things abide, everything is the same?

Rinpoche: Yes.

Question: If everything is the same, why is there duality and variety?

Rinpoche: There are various kinds of mistaken appearances for mind, however there is no particular reason for those appearances; there is no very good reason for them, there is no great reason. If one

were to say, why did this elephant appear in this dream? There is no particularly good reason why an elephant appeared in a dream.

Question: If there were something that existed but did not appear to anyone's mind, how would one know that there is nothing that exists that doesn't appear to anyone's mind?

Rinpoche: What is the reason for thinking that there is something that doesn't appear to anyone's mind?

Question: What would constitute the existence of such a thing?"

Rinpoche: Well it would have to be established in some way as separate from one's mind. What would qualify as evidence of something existing despite its not appearing to anyone's mind would have to be established as something apart from mind. That would be sufficient evidence. However, there isn't any such thing. No matter what there is, it only happens in the context of appearing to one's mind. It is because of appearances to mind that one engages in conversation. It is because of appearances to one's mind that one engages in various activity. Whatever we look for, it is purely an appearance to mind. In brief: If there is no appearance, then there is no working, i.e. nothing happens.

Question: What about a person with bad eyes seeing falling hairs in front of him.

Rinpoche: Yes. For instance, a person who has cataracts would have a perception of what looks like hair falling. In fact, this is mistaken and there are no falling hairs that are established in the way that they appear to be established, that exist in the way that they appear to exist. In that way, the appearance is deceptive. Deception does not come into what is true. Deception comes only into that which is mistaken, like for instance those falling hairs. Once there is a mistaken or erroneous appearance, then one's mind is deceived.

Question: In the meditation practice if we have thoughts of love and of benefiting others only in our own mind, are only uncommon appearances, how can they possibly benefit anyone else?

Rinpoche: Such meditation, such cultivation of love and compassion, does not directly benefit other people, rather through meditating in that way, one's own love and compassion increases. The potency or capacity of one's own love and compassion becomes stronger. Through becoming stronger it enters into all of one's behavior, whether by way of body, speech or mind or one's behavior becomes pervaded by love and compassion. When that happens, then one can actually help others. For that reason, we cultivate love and compassion in meditation.

Question: According to the Buddhist point of view, if a non-Buddhist were to assert true existence, what would that assertion be? What would that assertion necessarily contain within it?

Rinpoche: We Buddhists say that all phenomena are not inherently established and we affirm this lack of inherent establishment as the way in which things abide. Others assert that phenomena do exist truly, inherently, by way of their own nature and from that point of view they are mistaken. This does not mean that every last thing that they have to say is useless, however, in that there are many things that are presented and are quite useful, such as upaya, methods that are helpful in a variety of ways. However, from the point of view of asserting a self when there is, in fact, no self and asserting true existence when, in fact, things lack true existence, they are mistaken.

Question: What does it mean to say that something exists externally?

Rinpoche: Something existing externally would mean that it is not just an appearance for one's own mind, it is not just an aspect of one's own mind, it is something other than one's mind. It exists somewhere apart from that. Buddhists generally, and here we are particularly talking about the mind-only school who say that phenomena are just mind and particularly in the division of the Middle-way school called "empty of other" say that things do not exist apart from one's own mind; they do not exist elsewhere, separately. However, people tend to think that they do. Despite thinking that phenomena do exist apart from one's own mind, in fact, such does not occur. If one looks for phenomena somewhere else, one will not find them. The reason why one will not find them is because they do not exist.

Question: Do the phrases like "appearing to the mind" or "appearing for the mind," the same as the phrases "appearances being mind"

Rinpoche: I think those two statements have the same meaning. Generally when we are speaking of the mind-only school, there are two different aspects to that. One meaning of mind only is said to be "mind only in the sense that there is no other creator" and the other meaning of mind only is said to be "mind only in the sense of there being no other appearances", i.e. mind only in the sense that it is one's own mind that creates things, it is not something else that creates them, and secondly mind only in the sense that apparent or appearing objects are not other than one's own mind. Those are the two aspects of mind only. The first speaking of no creator that is other than mind refers to the fact that it depends upon afflictions that one engages in actions. Actions accumulate predispositions or

latencies. Latencies give rise to appearances and appearances produce feelings of pleasure and pain. Thus, there is no creator that is other than one's own mind. The second means straightforwardly that those objects that appear to various consciousnesses are just mind; they are not something other or separate from those perceiving consciousnesses themselves. In this discussion, we are talking about the second of those two, the assertion that appearances are just mind. The different phrases "appearing to mind" or "appearing for mind" aren't said differently in Tibetan; those statements on the one hand and the other statement saying that "appearances are mind" mean the same thing.

Question: Is it living within the envelope of one's own alaya in the various appearances?

Rinpoche: Yes, it's like that.

Question: How there can be any common appearances at all.

Rinpoche: In this text on differentiating dharmas and dharmata there is a discussion of appearances that are common and appearances that are uncommon. I don't need to say a whole lot about uncommon appearances; we already understand that they are uncommon. As for common appearances, what are called "common appearances," refers to the fact that they seem to be common.

Translator: At the end I said something about the stupa.

Rinpoche: There is a stupa; we all see a stupa out there. I see a stupa, other people see a stupa, you see a stupa. Since we all see it, we say, "There's a stupa there." The stupa that I see is an appearance of a stupa for my mind and the stupa that other people see is an appearance of a stupa for their minds. And the stupa that you see is an appearance of a stupa for your minds. So, there are these various appearances that are common or similar. We say that this comes about through similar actions, whereby similar sorts of predispositions have been accumulated, in dependence upon which similar sorts of appearances come about. To give an example. If somebody has jaundice, then they look at a white conch and it appears to be yellow. If a second person also has jaundice, they also look at that white conch and see that it appears to be yellow. If a third person who has jaundice looks at it, then it appears to be yellow for him too. So, all of these people who have jaundice look at a white conch and it appears to be yellow; they all see a yellow conch. There's a fourth person who doesn't have jaundice and looks at it; that person sees that it is white. Now you have one person who sees a white conch and three people who see a yellow conch. Who is right? Who is to say what is true in this case? Well, in fact, it's white, not yellow.

Question: But how can you assert that it is white? If it is just an appearance of the mind, then how can you say that this is right and the other is wrong? It is only an appearance. There is no true existence to the white conch.

Rinpoche: The discussion of the conch is not a discussion of true existence or the lack of true existence. It is a discussion about the appearance of white and the appearance of yellow. In using examples to illustrate the point that is difficult to understand, it is necessary not to confuse the example with the point exemplified by the example. So, in the example one is discussing, using the example of jaundice in the way in which it affects perception of color, as a way to indicate how appearances vary for different individuals. Now, even within the example the first person does not see the appearance of a yellow conch that appears to a second person. The second person does not see the appearance of a yellow conch that appears to the first person. Each person sees that which appears for themselves. When I see, for example, that stupa, there is an appearance for me. I don't see the appearance of the stupa that appears to another person's mind, rather just as through having a similar illness there comes about a similar misperception of the color of something. This is an example that is given in terms of the world, in terms that are acceptable to the world. The world already understands that if a person's eyesight is affected by an illness, then the illness is going to affect the way things will appear to that person. So, we are giving an example of something that is beyond the world in terms of the world. We are saying, just as you already know that, similarly there is something that is beyond that, which is that through the accumulation of various latencies, predispositions, impressions and so forth which remain with the mind, there come to be similar appearances such that I see a stupa, you see a stupa, other people see a stupa. But, in fact these are just individual appearances for the minds of individual persons.

Question: I asked Situ Rinpoche if it is possible to do the *tongleng* practice over time and space, for people who are dead, and he said yes. Would you explain how that is possible?

Rinpoche: Generally speaking, the main purpose of this practice of tongleng or "sending and taking" is to increase love and compassion in one's own mind and to abandon the wish to harm others, together with envy, aggression and so forth. When one does the practice of sending and taking, people generate great hope and fear about it. People think that through giving away all of their own happiness and drawing in the suffering of others, they will indeed end up with immeasurable sickness and hardship. Others have great hope in

regarding their companions, parents, loved one's; for instance, at a time when such a person becomes ill, one thinks that one could extract that illness from them and draw it to oneself. In that way one has great hope. However, neither such hope nor such fear is purposeful, necessary or to the point. The main point of sending and taking meditation is the cultivation of one's own mind, developing a pure motivation, fixing, healing or repairing one's motivation and intention, making it something extremely pure and developing a great force of the love and compassion and the wish to help others, if one does so, it is not the case that if one were to develop such a motivation that there would not be a benefit for others, rather gradually there would be a great benefit for others, if one had such a motivation.

For example, if someone had the wish and intention to go to Lhasa, Tibet, although some circumstances might make it possible to go and occasions or circumstances make it not possible to go, nevertheless having such an intention we could eventually go to Lhasa. However, if we had no such intention at all, then we would not go. Similarly, if onwe have a pure motivation to help others, then whether or not we are able to help them in a particular way or not, nevertheless in the end, through cultivating such an intention the fruition will eventually be achieved and we will finally be of great benefit for others.

Sometimes a person who has a very determined good thought or kindness is indeed able to help another person directly. For instance, there is a story of the great master Atisha, who at one point in his life had a disease in his hand. He said to his student Dronden that if Dronden were to take Atisha's hand and hold it in a particular way, his hand would be restored to health through doing the practice of sending and taking. Atisha told Dronden, "The reason why you will be able to do so is that you have extremely great kindness." So, it does happen that there could be direct benefit of a temporary sort with sending and taking practice.

Question: I didn't really understand what you were saying about direct perception of another person's mind, whether one is in a state of meditation or whether one is not in a state of meditation. Would you give an example?

Rinpoche: The difference between the two is that the apprehension directly of another person's mind within meditative equipoise is as an aspect of one's own samadhi, one's own meditative stabilization. Whereas the apprehension of another person's mind not from within meditative equipoise, its way of appearing, is just a likeness or a reflection of one's own mind.

Question: Would Rinpoche give an example. I can't quite grasp the meaning.

Rinpoche: An example of not being within meditation would be the way various appearances dawn within a dream; that is an example of what it is like for just an aspect or a reflection of mind to appear as something. An example of something from within meditative equipoise would be like the way, when one practices meditation, one has various sorts of experiences; it would be something like that.

Chapter 4

The Meaning of Dharmata in Brief

IV. REALIZATION OF DHARMATA

A. THE BRIEF EXPLANATION

19. Through introducing traits and a ground at all times,
Definitive verification as well as awareness,
The recollection, immersion into its core,
This six-point approach to pure being is unsurpassed.

The many different kinds of emptinesses are discussed in the Buddha's sutras. On one occasion the Buddha spoke about four different types of emptiness. In the *Heart* sutra it says "there is no form, no feeling, no perception... no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue...no consciousness," and so forth say that all phenomena lack inherent existence.

The Buddha's sutras say that phenomena are empty, but apart from saying that they are just empty, there are no reasons for this given. From just reading the sutras, it is difficult immediately to arrive at a definite idea of the meaning of such statements. Therefore, many learned persons have given reasons that allow us to understand why phenomena are empty.

The main logical argument for emptiness is the reasoning of dependent arising that was set forth by Nagarjuna. He explained that all phenomena depend upon one another and because of this they are not truly established.

We can illustrate this dependent relationship in terms of an example: I am holding up two sticks. One is four inches long and the other is two inches long. We say that there is "a long one" for the four-inch stick and "a short one" for the two-inch stick. When we think of these sticks, we think "this stick is long" and "that stick is short." If we take a third stick which is six inches long and remove the two-inch stick, we see that the stick that we used to see as the long one, now has become the short one. Previously, it was long, now it is short. The reason for this is that the stick wasn't inherently long to begin with, our mind just attributed the quality of "long" to it because it was next to a shorter stick. Then when we put the three of

them together, there is a short one, a long one and the one in the middle, which seems to be neither short nor long. In fact, "short," "long" and so forth are just designated or imputed by our mind; they don't exist (or we could say "inherent") with the object itself. This is not limited to "short" and "long" but it also applies to "big and small," "good and bad," "beautiful and ugly," "above and below," "east, south, north, west" and so on.

Another example would be that there is no direction that is really east and another direction that is actually west because these directions depend upon the relationship between objects. For instance, we talk about the east and the west. The east refers to Asia and the west refers to Europe and the Americas. But if we ask, "What is the reason for saying that Asia is the east and Europe and the Americas are the west?" There isn't any reason whatsoever. East and west are just designated or imputed by our mind. In this way, all these sorts of phenomena turn out to be mere conceptual formulations. However, some people would say, "Well, that's all well and good when we are talking about comparative qualities, but that doesn't apply to things existing on their own, for instance a house, a building, or a body which are made out of particles. Dependent arising doesn't apply there."

If we were to consider a particular example of a "solid" object such as our hand, we see it and other people see it. But really, where is it? If we were to divide and classify the hand, then we would see that there is a thumb, a first finger, a second finger and so forth; there is flesh, skin, bone and so on. Where, then, is the hand? Well really, there is no hand. How is it that "hand" comes about? It is in dependence upon the various fingers, the flesh, skin, bone's and so forth that one designates or imputes something to which one gives the name "hand," but in fact, "hand" is not substantially existent. This does not only apply to one's hand. It applies to one's right hand, one's left hand, legs, head, all external phenomena. Whenever one investigates and analyses, one discovers it is merely the gathering together (the collection or aggregation) of many different things, which one conceives as "a large thing." However, that thing is merely designated or imputed by one's own mind. The Buddha expressed this fact by speaking of the emptiness of outer phenomena, the emptiness of inner phenomena, and the fact that this phenomenon is not truly established. In fact phenomena is not validly existent; external and internal phenomena are empty of inherent existence.

If things are empty, does that mean that nothing is apprehended whatsoever? No, that's not what it means. This is not a refutation of

appearances per se, rather it shows that even though there is nothing that is in itself "long," nevertheless if there is something in relation to it that is short, something is said to be "long" and something is said to be "short." This dependent relationship also applies to self and other. Even though there is no self, but because we think "other," we automatically think "I." And even though there is no other, it is created by thinking "I." We could also apply this to mountains, the "near" mountain and the "distant" mountain. One mountain is near and depends upon another mountain being further away. Another mountain is far away in dependence upon another mountain being nearer.

Thus, dharmata or how things really are is not empty in the way that space is just empty, rather emptiness allows phenomena to appear. And within the nature of emptiness, phenomena arises. This then shows us how conventional phenomena or appearances that we perceive, and the ultimate lack of inherent existence (emptiness) fit together. Thus, conventional, dependent appearances and the lack of inherent existence or emptiness do not contradict one another.

There is such unceasing appearance of both inner phenomena and outer phenomena and therefore many sorts of different appearances dawn because of strong predispositions or latencies. If we discuss this in terms of experience, we could consider the example of a dream. Various sorts of phenomena appear in a dream, but are they what they seem to be? No, they are not, nevertheless they do appear. If we dream an elephant, it clearly appears to us, but there is no real elephant in the room with us. This is an example of the way in which conventional appearances arise even though they do not really exist.

We first begin to understand dharmata or "the nature of phenomena," intellectually, then we meditate upon it and finally it becomes manifest. Since the nature of phenomena is naturally peaceful, therefore when we realizes it, our own disturbing emotions diminish and cease and suffering that ordinarily comes about from external and internal phenomena are eliminated. So, this is why it is extremely important and necessary to understand emptiness of external and internal phenomena.

Dharmata of the Sutra Tradition

The understanding of dharmata can be gained either by the sutra tradition or the mantra (vajrayana) tradition. In the sutra tradition to abandon passion, aggression, conceptuality and so forth, emptiness

is first taught. Next, it is pointed out that this emptiness is not a mere nothingness, but that it has a quality of *luminous clarity.*

As we have discussed already, there are a variety of ways of sharing that external and internal phenomena are not inherently existent. One procedure to demonstrate that external appearances do not exist is to reason that the consciousnesses that apprehend these external phenomena are not real and therefore external appearances that they perceive are not truly established either.

Another approach is presented by the Middle-way school using the logical arguments of dependent arising and the arguments of phenomena not being one or many. Thus, it is shown that all external phenomena and internal mind do not exist by their own nature, rather they are inherently empty. This reasoning is called the *Rongtong* tradition or "empty-of-self school." In this way, all phenomena are found to be empty and through we arrive at a definite knowledge of phenomena as empty. By first generating a definite belief that phenomena has the nature of emptiness, and joining that with a practice of meditation, this definite knowledge becomes gradually more and more clear, until one arrives at a direct perception of emptiness. Proceeding in this way is extremely good, however, it takes a very long time.

While it is true that all impure phenomena have the nature of emptiness, this emptiness is not a voidness or a mere nothingness, in which nothing whatsoever exists. Rather, it has the nature of luminous clarity, which is the basis for a Buddha's wisdom (Skt. *jnana*), of the development of a Buddha's omniscience. Emptiness is the ability for all phenomena to appear and to be realized. Therefore, in the sutras and in the treatises it is referred to as "an emptiness that is endowed with the supreme of all aspects," meaning that it is suitable for all phenomena to appear, suitable for all phenomena to be known.

In the context of fruition, this state is called "a Buddha's wisdom." In the context of ordinary, unenlightened beings, it is called "Buddha-nature (Skt. *sugatagarbha*) or "the essence of the sugata" and is thus regarded as a capacity. This view of the Middle-way is referred to as "empty-of-other-school" or *Shentong* tradition which contrasts with the previous discussed Rongtong tradition.[24] This factor of luminous clarity is somewhat easier to meditate upon and therefore the Shentong view is referred to as "that which joins the sutra and mantra traditions."

Dharmata of the Mantra Tradition

In the tantra or the meditation in the vajrayana, one does not realize emptiness through the path of reasoning, but rather one takes direct perception as the path of meditation. This is done without considering whether external phenomena are empty or not, because it is difficult to meditate upon the emptiness of external phenomena. The vajrayana path emphasizes examining internal mind and looking directly at this mind.

This mind is regarded then as being the form of dharmata itself. As for the mind's way of existing, if we were to look, it would be easier to realize the nature of mind than the nature of emptiness presented by way of the path of reasoning. It is relatively easier to understand and to realize that mind is not just a "dead" emptiness, but rather that it has with it a factor of luminous clarity.

If one looks for the ear consciousness, one doesn't find anything, rather there is simply emptiness and the factor of luminous clarity. Similarly, with the nose consciousness, that which experiences smells and the tongue consciousness or the body consciousness, if one looks for them they can't be found, rather there is just emptiness and a luminous clarity. What about the sixth or mental consciousness which has all kinds of thoughts and conceptions of good and bad, liking and disliking and so forth? When one looks there are indeed all kinds of thoughts and discursive activities. However, if one looks for those thoughts themselves, or for the mental consciousnesses themselves by asking, "Is it inside the body? Is it outside the body? Is it somewhere in-between? What is its form? What is its color or shape?" and so forth there is nothing to designate and say "Aha, that's it." There's nothing that's found, there's nothing that's seen. Why? Is it because one is not capable of finding such a thing? Is it because one doesn't know how to look? No, that's not the reason. It's because those thoughts have no nature of their own. Is it because one's mind has somehow gone completely blank? No, because the mind can realize things. Therefore, this sixth mental consciousness is itself a union of emptiness and luminous clarity.

In terms of the sutra path, one proceeds by way of reasoning. In terms of mantra or vajrayana, one proceeds by taking direct perception as the path; arriving at a realization of the union of emptiness and luminous clarity and practicing in that way. Thus, Gampopa, said, "To know definitely: Look at your own mind." This is to say, that if we look somewhere other than our own mind, we will not find the authentic view. If we look for the nature of our own

mind, then we will find the authentic view, that is, luminous clarity, emptiness, peacefulness, that which is called "the mind's way of resting." That indeed is the view and what our mind is.

Questions

Question: Would Rinpoche explain the difference between the alaya consciousness according to the Chittamatra and Shentong view?
Rinpoche: The alaya consciousness that is explained by the Chittamatra or Mind-only school is presented as the basis for impure, samsaric appearances. it is said that if there wasn't any such thing, then there would be no basis for phenomena to dawn; there would be nothing that could serve as a basis that would cause or enable various sorts of appearances to dawn. Therefore, the mind-only school says that there must be such a mind-basis-of-all; it must undoubtedly exist and, in fact, it must be a truly existent phenomenon.

The Middle-way Empty-of-other-school does not have such a conception, rather they say that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence; there is no phenomenon, not even a single one, that is not empty of inherent existence, so all phenomena are empty. But that emptiness is not a mere nothingness, rather it is endowed with the capacity for a Buddha's wisdom; it has the potency or capacity for a Buddha's omniscience and in that way it is the essence of a Buddha's all-knowing or omniscient awareness. It is therefore called "the sugatagarbha" or "the essence of the sugata" ("the essence of the one gone blissfully or happily"). It is not just some vapid or dead thing, rather it is a suitability for exalted knowing. That's the difference between the mind-only school's view and the view of the Middle-way empty-of-other-school. The difference comes about by way of the one not having realized emptiness fully and the other having realized it fully.
Question: How does one know that there is a dharmata that is not just some sort of uncommon appearance?
Rinpoche: Dharmata is something that has passed beyond, transcended, gone further than either common appearances or uncommon appearances. If one approaches this from the point of view of reasoning, it is through seeing that both common appearances and uncommon appearances are not established, do not exist in the way that they appear, i.e. one discovers that their nature or their entity is an emptiness. In terms of meditation, if one looks within meditation directly at one's own mind's way of abiding and

sees that, then this is not something mistaken. In the context of meditation, one knows. The realization of dharmata is not a dawning of an appearance of any sort. It is something that has passed beyond that.

Question: How do we know that the realization is not deluded?

Rinpoche: When one meditates, various sorts of experiences come about, this, that and the other. Sometimes they are quite pleasurable, different sorts of things appear and are seen. However, those sorts of things are just occasional or temporary. What we are talking about here is something called "the mind's way of abiding," i.e. something that goes through all of that. One sees that the mind is luminous and empty and this is not something that is made by one's own mind, rather in seeing it, one has a definite knowledge of that. Such is called "introduction to the nature of mind." It's not just some sort of experience that comes along. It is seeing that which actually abides as the nature of mind.

Chapter 5

The Meaning of Dharmata in Detail

B. THE DETAILED EXPLANATION

1. THE DEFINITIVE TRAITS

20a. The defining traits in brief are just as they are.

The first aspect of dharmata is "the major or definitive characteristics of dharmata." The definitive characteristic of dharmata, or one could say, the nature of phenomena, were described earlier. The characteristics of dharmata has four particular marks or aspects: First it is free from an apprehended object; second there is nothing to be perceived; third there is nothing that is expressed; and fourth there is nothing that expresses.

What is the meaning of these four aspects? In many different places the Buddha said that all phenomena are empty, however, just saying that isn't sufficient. If one were to ask, "Does that word 'emptiness' indicate accurately and fully the nature of phenomena, the way in which phenomena abide?" No, it doesn't. "Does "luminous clarity" point out fully the way in which phenomena abide?" No, it doesn't. Does "wisdom" point out accurately the final nature of things?" No, it doesn't. There isn't a word that can properly describe dharmata. For that reason it is said that dharmata or the true nature of things is inexpressible meaning no matter what word one uses, one cannot express dharmata just as it is. If one attempts to think about dharmata, then it cannot be thought about accurately by the mind of an ordinary person. For that reason it is said to "have passed beyond the sphere of the minds of ordinary persons."

For instance in a sutra in which Manjushri asks the Buddha, "Do phenomena exist or do they not exist?" The Buddha replied by remaining silent. Some scholars have said that in saying nothing the Buddha indicated that the true nature of things is not something that can be expressed in speech.

On other occasions dharmata is referred to as "the object of the activity of each individual person's self-knowledge." Taking this

phrase apart, the Tibetan is *rang-rig* or "knowing itself" means that one looks at one's own mind, not somewhere else. When it says that it is that way for each individual person, it means that it is not an external thing that someone else can point to and say, "Oh, there it is. It is over there." Rather, it is something that each person has to see for himself. The person has to look at the nature of his or her own mind or this dharmata. It is not something that can be shown by somebody else.

So, dharmata is characterized in terms of these four aspects: (i.) it lacks anything to be perceived; (ii.) it lacks a perceiver; (iii.) it cannot be expressed; and (iv.) it is nothing that expresses.

2. THE LOCATION

20b. The ground consists in the whole of phenomena
And sacred scripture, the whole of the sutra collections.

The second aspect of dharmata is called "location" or where we can find dharmata. Dharmata pervades all of samsara and all of nirvana. Dharmata is found in every single phenomenon.

The teachings of the Buddha are very vast and extensive, so they have been gathered into what are called *three turnings of the wheel of dharma*. In the first turning, the Buddha emphasized the teachings for the *hearers* (Skt. *shravakas*), where he presented methods for realizing the way in which phenomena exist. In the second turning, the Buddha emphasized the teachings on emptiness and presented methods for realizing the way in which all phenomena exist, which is the dharmata. Then in the third turning, the Buddha emphasized Buddha-nature (Skt. *sugatagarbha*), the union of wisdom and emptiness, and the methods for realizing the way of abiding (which is the dharmata). Thus, dharmata is discussed in all of the scriptures of the Buddha.

3. DEFINITIVE VERIFICATION

21. Definitive verification applying to this
Is comprised of appropriate mental cultivation,
Based on the sutra collections of mahayana,
Embracing the path of application in full.

The third aspect of dharmata is called "definite discrimination." This is a discussion of the *five paths* (Skt. *marga*), the first of which is called "the path of accumulation." On the path of accumulation

one principally listens to and thinks about the meaning of the Buddha-dharma, and comes to understand its meaning. The next two paths are called the "path of connection" and the "path of union." At this point one meditates upon the meaning that one has understood in the previous path and one realizes the way in which phenomena exist. Therefore, this is called "definite discrimination."

4. AWARENESS

22. Awareness, because authentic view is attained,
Is the path of vision on which the suchness attained
Is in a fashion direct, whatever encountered.

The fourth aspect of dharmata is called *rigpa* in Tibetan. Rigpa has several meanings and the meaning of the word here is really just seeing, knowing, understanding. This is related to the third "*path of seeing.*" By bringing what one has learned in the first two paths into the practice of meditation, gradually one's knowledge becomes clearer and clearer, until one arrives at a direct perception of dharmata. If one proceeds on the sutra tradition, one does go by way of definitive knowledge to the point of direct perception of dharmata. If one proceeds on the vajrayana path, one's introduction to the way in which all things abide becomes direct perception. One then meditates in terms of that experience and arrives at seeing or knowledge, which is the name of this fourth point, i.e. one knows and one realizes just how phenomena actually abide. This is the point of achieving the genuine view.

5. MINDFULNESS

23. The recollection applied to reality is seen;
Through awareness it comprises the path of meditation,
Involving all factors inducing enlightenment,
Whose point it is to purge away the stains.

The fifth aspect of dharmata is connected with the fourth "path of meditation." What is explained here is how one practices subsequent to the path of seeing. One practices in terms of remembering, recollecting, or mindfulness of what one has realized or experienced at the path of seeing. Rising from this direct realization of the dharmata, one knows that one has realized it, and this recollection or mindfulness of dharmata is the understanding of dharmata. However, one does not just remember it or think about it

or be mindful of it; rather one meditates again and again and again, realizing dharmata in a direct manner. One progresses gradually towards enlightenment through such practice, abandoning the phenomena that are contrary with enlightenment.

6. IMMERSION

24. Here, immersion into its core complete
Is suchness rendered free of any stain,
Where all appear exclusively as suchness —
This in turn is transformation complete.

With the recollection of the fourth path, one arrives at the fruition. This is the sixth aspect of dharmata and is called "thorough transformation." One word within the Tibetan somewhat says as if one has changed the place where one dwells, in the sense that first of all one began dwelling in samsara, among impure phenomena, but one has transformed that; leaving the impure behind, one dwells in the pure. That is the sense of thorough transformation of one's place. The actual name here, though, refers to the possibility of such a transformation. The point then is that the impure has been abandoned, the pure has been achieved and one sees the very nature of the dharmata. Having seen and then meditated upon it, one arrives at realizing dharmata as undifferentiable from one's self. In fact, it has always been undifferentiable from one's self but has not been realized as such. Now one has realized dharmata as undifferentiable from oneself and that undifferentiability has become manifest. So, this then is referred to as "immersing into dharmata."

In the *Uttara Tantra* it says, "Sentient beings are buddhas, however this is obstructed by the adventitious stains." "Adventitious" means that it doesn't need to be there, it doesn't dwell in the very nature and so one can separate from it. So, these adventitious defilements that prevent Buddhahood and when they are cleared away, one arrives at dharmata, without being polluted or blocked by any defilements whatsoever. This is a thorough transformation and refers to achieving the final rank.

That explains the nature of thoroughly changing one's place and what it means to change one's place completely and thoroughly. An extensive explanation of transformation in ten points then follows in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

The Transformation of Dharma into Dharmata

C. TRANSFORMATION OF THE TEN POINTS

25. This ten-point presentation of transformation
Provides an unsurpassable introduction
Because it is the way to approach the essence,
Ingredients and individuals,
The special traits, requirements and ground,
Mental cultivation and application,
The disadvantages and benefits.

The custom of expositions such as this is to first give a brief overview of the topic and then to give and an extensive, detailed explanation. In the previous section there was the brief overview of the nature of the thorough transformation of state. We now give an extensive explanation, going through ten points serially. Since everything said in the brief indication is then explained extensively in the following section, I think it be all right to just skip the brief indication and go directly to the extensive explanation.

1. THE ESSENCE OF THE TRANSFORMATION

26. Of these the introduction to the essence
Includes the circumstantial stains and suchness:
When these in fact do not and do appear,
This is suchness, that untouched by stain.

The first aspect of dharma into dharmata is the nature of this transformation of our state from an ordinary person into an enlightened person. In the *Uttara Tantra* or the word "tantra" refers to the continuity of the Buddha-nature that is gradually purified from the state of an ordinary sentient being to a bodhisattva to a Buddha. The *Uttara Tantra* says that a Buddha's wisdom exists in all sentient beings, however, it is not manifest. It does not manifest because of

the adventitious defilements which have the quality of being temporary and are not part of or the nature of Buddha-nature. The defilements are the disturbing emotions such as attachment or passion, aggression or anger, and ignorance.

The *Uttara Tantra*, refers to Buddha-nature (Skt. *sugatagarbha*) as having three aspects: those of ordinary sentient beings, those as bodhisattvas, and those as buddhas. In the first impure state of an ordinary being, we are saturated with disturbing emotions. When some partial purification has taken place, then we are at the state of a bodhisattva. And when complete purification has taken place such that the disturbing emotions have been abandoned completely, then that is the state of a Buddha.

An example of this process would be like the sun first being completely obscured by the clouds such that it is not seen at all. As the layer of clouds becomes thinner, then sunlight becomes slightly stronger or slightly manifest. Finally, when the clouds have been burned away completely, the sun is seen brilliantly and brightly. Similarly, the Buddha's wisdom and the *dharmadhatu* or "the sphere of reality" is first not seen at all; later it is seen slightly, and finally, when all stains have been cleared away and it is seen completely in all aspects. Just as the clouds are not part of the sun, so the disturbing emotions are not part of Buddha-nature. So whether we refer to this as sugatagarbha or dharmata, gradually the nature of this thorough transformation comes about.

2. INGREDIENTS OF THE TRANSFORMATION

27. The introduction to substance, ingredients:
Of awareness in form of the vessel in common shared
A transformation to suchness is undergone;
Of the sutra collections' dharmadhatu itself
A transformation to suchness is undergone;
Of awareness components of sentient beings not shared
A transformation to suchness is undergone.

This second aspect of the transformation of dharma into dharmata concerns three topics: outer, inner, and various names that are given. These three topics have an implied order of body (appearances), speech (terms), and mind (thoughts).

First of all, there are external forms that are shared in common. This is parallel to a previous discussion about the nature of external phenomena, which are common or shared among various sentient beings and those that are uncommon or unshared. With regard to

those that are shared, we are speaking about the world that we inhabit as the container with external phenomena such as mountains, and buildings making up the conventional world that serves as a container. These external conventional truths all possess this quality of dharmata. As for the way in which such things exist, the way these various conventional truths abide, is by the dharmadhatu, which is the lack of inherent existence.

The second topic is of the terms and meanings. The Sanskrit term "dharmadhatu (Tib. *chö ying*), can be translated as "the expanse of reality" or just "the expanse of dharma." The meaning of the term *dhatu* in Sanskrit and *ying* in Tibetan is that it cannot be stopped by anything and pervades everything. An example of a ordinary sort of phenomena is space because space is something that cannot be obstructed at all, so that it is possible to go absolutely anywhere. Similarly, the nature of this dhatu or expanse is a suitability for whatever good qualities might exist to come into existence, to be generated, and a suitability for whatever faults exist to be abandoned. Since it is not an impure expanse but rather a pure one, it is referred to as "the expanse of dharma." or dharmadhatu.

In the situation of the impure, we have various sorts of names, words, letters and so forth that are the means of expressing various meanings; they are the signifiers of that which is to be signified or the expressor of that which is to be expressed. However, the nature of such impure phenomena (names, words and so forth) is a lack of inherent existence. In the context of that which is final, then, we understand the dharmata as manifesting as the various sutras, treatises and so forth, teaching emptiness or dharmata itself

The third topic refers to various sorts of internal phenomena, particularly the various elements within sentient beings such as the eight consciousnesses. What is indicated is the way in which impure, internal phenomena can be transformed into a buddha's wisdom.

Although there are no divisions within dharmadhatu itself, we can make various divisions in terms of conventional phenomena. In terms of conventional phenomena, we classify dharmata into three different divisions: the external, shared phenomena; speech that expresses and that is expressed; and internal phenomena of various unshared states of consciousnesses.

In terms of the final effect, Buddhahood has three internal divisions: the *dharmakaya* or "truth body," the *sambhogakaya* or "complete enjoyment body," and the *nirmanakaya* or "emanation body."[25]

The dharmakaya refers to the way in which all phenomena exist. The sambhogakaya is slightly coarser, and the nirmanakaya is so

coarse that it can be shown to all sentient beings. If we relate these with the three aspects of dharmata, the shared phenomena at the point of the complete manifestation of dharmata, is related with dharmakaya. Next, by having undergone complete and thorough transformation, the various sorts of expressive terms and expressed meanings manifest as the sambhogakaya. The nirmanakaya refers to the factor of luminous clarity, awareness and knowledge of the mind. The transformation of such is a transformation into a manifest state as a nirmanakaya. Thus, if we are speaking about dharmata in terms of the result achieved at the final state, there is the manifestation as the three *kayas* or "three bodies of a Buddha."

3. AN INDIVIDUAL'S TRANSFORMATION

28. The approach as related to individuals:
The first two of these are transformations to suchness
Pertaining to Buddhas as well as to bodhisattvas,
The last pertains also to listeners and to self-Buddhas.

The third aspect of the transformation of dharma into dharmata is concerned with the activity of the three buddha bodies or kayas.

The first, the dharmakaya of a Buddha, is accessible only in the sphere of activity only of a Buddha. Why is that? This is because the dharmakaya is the manifest state of the complete and thorough transformation being utterly free from everything that is to be abandoned. It is a state in which all the good qualities have become manifest. For that reason, it is an object for the activity only of a completely enlightened person, a buddha.

Thus, the dharmakaya is spoken of as "the fulfillment of one's own welfare," in that one has generated everything that is to be abandoned and one has generated all good qualities needed. Is the dharmakaya all that is needed? No, because one must achieve the welfare of others. Therefore, the dharmakaya by itself is not enough but needs to be able to display a form to other sentient beings. Therefore, there is the display of the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. Because these last two kayas have an aspect of form, they are called rupakayas or "the form bodies."

Second, the sambhogakaya is displayed to those who have pure action or pure karma, namely, the bodhisattvas. So the sambhogakaya reveals itself to the pure bodhisattvas. However, this also isn't sufficient because a buddha needs to manifest to ordinary or impure beings.

To help others who have impure karma, the nirmanakaya manifests. Thus, in order to teach students who are in an impure state, various emanation bodies or nirmanakaya are displayed. To teach ordinary beings the profound dharma would not be particularly beneficial, so ordinary beings are taught the provisional meaning with the nirmanakaya teachings. Dharma of the paths of the hinayana to shravakas and pratyekabuddhas.

4. THE TRAITS OF TRANSFORMATION

29. The introduction to traits especially advanced
Pertains to Buddhas as well as to bodhisattvas:
The distinguishing trait of totally pure domains,
That which is gained through attaining the dharmakaya,
Sambhogakaya as well as nirmanakaya.
The insight, instruction and consummate mastery
Are attainments distinctively greater comparatively.

The fourth aspect of transforming dharma into dharmata discusses the change of dharma into dharmata at the highest level of this transformation, from an impure state to a pure state. When we have arrived at a pure state, by way of the first four paths (the paths of accumulation, connection, seeing, and meditation) of the five paths gradually the state is thoroughly transformed until one arrives at what are called the pure bodhisattva levels (the 7,8,9, and 10th levels). So, what is being taught in this topic is principally the pure levels of a bodhisattva and the purification of the buddha field.

The three bodies of a Buddha teach dharma, enabling the transformation from the impure to the pure state. Thus, one arrives at the point of having the capacity to teach the excellent dharma to those students who are to be trained, and in that way to enable their release from samsara.

5. REALIZING WHAT IS REQUIRED

30. The introduction to realizing what is required:
The distinguishing factor of previous wishing prayers,
The distinguishing factor of mahayana teaching
As focal point; and the further distinguishing fact
Of effective application to all ten levels.

The fifth aspect of transformation of dharma into dharmata is the purpose of this thorough transformation of our state. It goes back to

our wishing prayers (Tib. *mön lam*), and particularly, our former aspirational prayers that we be able to accomplish the welfare of our self and the welfare of all other sentient beings as well. Beginning with the first *bodhisattva level* up to the tenth bodhisattva level and then finally to fruition (which is Buddhahood itself), we gradually achieve our own realization and we are able to help others as well. We arrive at the point of being able to teach the great vehicle or mahayana and in that way to achieve that which we have longed and had a great hope for. Our wish has now been realized and we can actually truly help both ourselves and all other sentient beings as well.

The sixth aspect of the transformation of dharma into dharmata is very detailed so we will discuss this in the next chapter.

Questions

Question: Would it be correct to say that the dharmadhatu is the expanse in which the dharmakaya manifests?
Rinpoche: The word *ku* in Tibetan, kaya in Sanskrit, "body" in English, indicates a form such as a form of a human being that is displayed, dawns or appears. In Tibetan we distinguish between an ordinary word for body and an honorific term for body. This word *ku* being the honorific term, so we say that. In fact, when one speaks about the gradual manifestation of the effect or fruit, one talks about it in terms of the achievement of such bodies or kaya. However, what is this thing? In fact, it refers to the realization of the way in which all phenomena abide, the realization of dharmata. It refers to the manifestation of that manner of abiding. It refers to the abandonment of everything that is to be abandoned, all confusion, all mistakes whatsoever, the purification of ignorance and the full flowering of all good qualities. I think it would be suitable to say that the effect or fruit is indeed achieved within dharmadhatu.
Question: It sounded like sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya weren't natural or spontaneous things that came out of the dharmakaya. It sounded like a person could achieve all those qualities, yet maybe they wouldn't be able to emanate, if that's the proper word, the nirmanakaya form. I thought it was spontaneous, natural occurrence.
Rinpoche: There is no one who, despite having achieved dharmakaya, is unable to accomplish the welfare of others. Through realizing the dharmadhatu, the expanse of reality, the expanse of dharma, one has accomplished one's own welfare fully. This expanse of emptiness is, however, not a mere nothingness, rather

there is the factor of luminous clarity, in which the two forms of wisdom, the two aspects of a Buddha's wisdom manifest, dawn. Those two aspects are first of all what is known as the knowledge of the mode of phenomena, the knowledge of the way in which phenomena abide, i.e. the realization of the mode of abiding of all phenomena or realization of the final nature of all phenomena. Together with that there is the knowledge of the extent or variety of phenomena, i.e. sentient beings, the various conventional phenomena that are endowed with or the host for this quality of dharmata. One understands that knowledge of the variety of phenomena, one understands how confusion is born, the consequences of such confusion, the means for separating from confusion and the various stages one goes through as one gradually separates from confusion, then the fruition that is achieved at the point of having separated from such confusion. This quality of luminous clarity that is an aspect of dharmadhatu has the three characteristics within it. These are the quality of knowledge, the quality of tender love, and the quality of potency so that it is possible to display the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya and to enter into such a display both naturally and spontaneously.

Question: If the Shakyamuni Buddha was a physical being how is it possible for that physical being to function, for example to speak each word that is expressed as a choice of all the possible words that can be expressed? From the point of view of the dharmakaya, there is no basis for this distinction.

Rinpoche: Generally speaking, there are the two aspects of a Buddha's wisdom that I was just speaking about: the knowledge of the nature of phenomena or the mode of phenomena and the knowledge of the extent or variety of phenomena. There is a reason for that. In the context of the ultimate, i.e. the dharmadhatu, there is freedom from various distinctions. However, the dawning of appearances within such dharmadhatu does not necessitate a change or transformation within dharmadhatu itself, rather dharmas (phenomena) and dharmata (the nature of phenomena) abide together, they are equal. So, even though a Buddha knows dharmata, this does not entail not knowing the various phenomena that are endowed with the quality of dharmata. It does not entail that one does not know the extent of various appearances. In this way, various sorts of host of phenomena, so to speak, dawn clearly and are known without mixing them up, confusing one with another or any sort of mistake or error. Thus when we speak about the five wisdoms of a Buddha, we speak about the wisdom of individual realization, which refers to knowing each phenomenon distinctly and

clearly, such that one does not get confused in teaching, in giving oral instructions to others and there is no mistake.

Chapter 7

The Foundation for the Transformation of Dharma into Dharmata

There are ten aspects of the transformation of dharma into dharmata. The first five were covered in the previous chapter and we will now discuss the sixth aspect of the transformation, which is non-conceptual wisdom in which wisdom refers to jnana (or *yeshe* in Tibetan).

6. THE FOUNDATION FOR THE TRANSFORMATION

31. The introduction involving the ground or support
Is into original wisdom, the concept-free.
As this is approached in a manner involving six points
Since the focal requirement, attributes surrendered,
And application authentic in its mode,
Defining characteristics and benefits
And full understanding are hereby introduced.

This verse is a brief summary of the whole topic of the foundation of non-conceptual wisdom and within this topic there are six different aspects or topics covered in the following detailed description.

(A). THE FOCAL REQUIREMENT

32. The first of these, the focal requirement,
Should be known to be introduced by the following four:
The mahayana teachings, commitment to these,
Certitude, gatherings fully complete are the grounds.

The sixth aspect of the foundation of the transformation of dharma into dharmata concerns how we observe or the "focal requirement." To understand how we observe this non-conceptual wisdom, we need to study the mahayana teachings which is done in four stages:

The first stage is to listen to, that is, to study both the words of the Buddha (the sutras) and also the commentaries (the shastras). After this, we need to engage in samadhi or "meditative stabilization" to thoroughly realize this non-conceptual wisdom.

As said earlier, the shastras are considered to be of greater importance than even the words of the Buddha and the oral instructions are of greater importance than the treatises. Others might think that the sutras, the words of the Buddha, would be most important, however, the treatises are more important than the sutras. The oral instructions are more important than the treatises and that needs to be well understood.

The second stage of this foundation is called "admiration or longing." Having listened to the mahayana dharma, we begin to understand the nature of phenomena. We recognize that it is not just something we know, but rather that it is extremely profound being the cause that helps us and all others. Through understanding this, we begin to have great admiration and longing for it.

The third stage is developing a certainty of this non-conceptual wisdom. There is the need for such longing and admiration, but that alone is not adequate. In the sutras the Buddha gives the example of gold. We do not just accept a person's word that it is gold, but we must cut it, heat it, etc. before we accept that it truly gold. Similarly, if someone says, "this is the word of the Buddha" we must analyze the teaching carefully determining if it is a provisional teaching or a definitive teaching. We have to study it carefully to gain a definite understanding of it. We must come to understand it without any doubt and for that reason, to develop this third stage called, "giving birth to definite discrimination."

The fourth stage of understanding non-conceptual wisdom is called "thoroughly completing the collections." Having listened to the teachings and having generated a longing for them and then having arrived at certainty of its meaning, we must practice, we must meditate, to develop a thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom of it.

B. ABANDONING UNFAVORABLE PHENOMENA

33. The second, which treats of surrendering attributes,
Is also introduced by way of four themes,
As what is unfavorable and the remedies,
The suchness as well as the realization of this
Are attributes all, on the grounds of their being surrendered;

34. Doing this in respective order as follows:
The coarse and the middling, followed by those which are fine
And those which persist for a very long time indeed,
The attributes are surrendered entirely.

The second foundation for the foundation of the transformation of dharma into dharmata is abandoning or what is called "surrendering" that which is unfavorable. What needs to be abandoned is that which is contrary to non-conceptual wisdom. There are actually four things that need to be abandoned.

First we need to give up attachment to "those things needed to be abandoned" which are mainly the disturbing emotions because these emotions are contrary to non-conceptual wisdom. This is especially true for the disturbing emotion of ignorance which is the ignoring of the way phenomena really is.

Second, we need to abandon attachment to the antidotes to the disturbing emotions. In order to place our mind in an unfabricated or uncontrived way within the true nature of phenomena attachment to even the antidotes themselves also have to be abandoned.

Third, after we have abandoned attachments to the disturbing emotions and attachment to the antidotes, it is not adequate to merely abandon one's attachment to and conceptualization of objects such as desire and hatred or the antidotes to such objects. But we must abandon attachment to dharmata and conceptual discrimination with regard to dharmata also.

Having overcome conceptualization and attachment to the discordant phenomena, the antidotes to those phenomena, and suchness itself, we must fourthly abandon even the perceiving consciousness that realizes these things. Having realized suchness just as it is, having progressed along the various paths and having achieved fruition, one would still have attachment for the genuine view itself. So, one must abandon conceptualization and attachment with regard to the genuine view.

Having abandoned such apprehension of signs, even with regard to the actual view, then the thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom can become manifest.

There is a procedure for abandoning these four different things, so this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom can manifest. The way we abandon these four things is done in terms of the most obvious to the most subtle which corresponds to the four classes of attributes that need to be abandoned.

First, we recognize the disturbing emotions as something to be abandoned. These are the obvious objects of abandonment and the easiest to abandon.

Second, there are the remedies or antidotes to the disturbing emotions and they are good qualities. We tend to regard them as important, so they are more difficult to abandon because of our attachment to them. These are regarded as a more subtle class of attributes to be abandoned.

Third, there is suchness or dharmata itself which is the way in which all phenomena exists. Our attachment to it is more subtle and is very difficult to abandon being a very subtle attribute.

Fourth, there is realization of dharmata, realization of the way in which all phenomena exist. Our attachment to it is extremely subtle and difficult to abandon. This attachment is extremely subtle and persists for a long time.

C. AUTHENTIC APPLICATION OR STAGES OF MEDITATION

35. As regards application authentic in its mode,
There are four degrees of engagement in this as well:
Application involving something to focus on,
Application involving nothing to focus on,
Application devoid of focuser serving as focus,
Application whose focus is nothing to focus on.

The third aspect of the foundation for the transformation of dharma into dharmata concerns how we actually apply ourselves to abandoning dharma for dharmata. The first two aspects (studying the mahayana doctrine and abandoning unfavorable phenomena) tell us how to abandon everything that goes against dharmata. Now in this third aspect we will examine how we do this or "correct applications" which also has four stages.

We begin at the first stage in which we focus on something which is observing that all phenomena is just mind only. In this stage we are not able to directly apprehend non-conceptual wisdom directly, so we must go to the second stage.

In the second stage we do not focus our attention on anything specific with this being called the "application of nothing to focus on." In the third stage we not only don't focus upon anything but there is no longer even an observer and something to be observed. Finally, in the fourth stage there is "nothing to focus on" which means we see dharmata just as it is. We must realize that this progression of stages does not lead us to a state of voidness of being

like a stone. No, this last stage of observing dharmata directly is one of "complete illumination" or full intelligence and luminosity in which there is no darkness (or ignorance).

D. DEFINING TRAITS OR CHARACTERISTICS OF DHARMATA

36. Here the defining traits are introduced
Through three parameters vital to comprehension.
Because with respect to reposing in pure being
There is nothing of two and nothing expressible,
And this is sublime repose in pure being.

In the transformation of dharma into dharmata we (1) had to study the mahayana teachings, (2) abandoned the unfavorable phenomena, (3) entered into stages of meditation and (4) now in this fourth aspect we will discuss the characteristics of dharmata. We begin by giving three different aspects of being in dharmata.

First we "abide in dharmata" which means we rest in an utterly uncontrived state.

Second, we rest is a state "devoid of appearance" which means there is an absence of dualistic concentrations of "I" and "other" so there are no appearances. We are speaking about the state of meditation when placing our mind in an even balanced meditative state. At the time of the paths of seeing, principally within the path of meditation, there is no appearance of visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects whatsoever; rather only emptiness appears.

Third, "appearances appear to us to be illusions." Toward the end of the path of the pure bodhisattva levels (7 through 10) and Buddhahood itself appearances dawn as illusions and not as real solid objects. Also at Buddhahood itself there is a complete mixing of appearance and emptiness.

Now taking these three in more detail:

The first characteristic of dharmata is called, "reposing in a pure being." We are speaking about resting or dwelling in dharmata itself. We are relying upon the sutra presentation, rather than the vajrayana presentation. In the sutra tradition, we first determine just how all phenomena exists. With this definite knowledge, we gradually move into this samadhi called "a meditative equipoise." In this meditation we realize the emptiness of external phenomena and the internal mind. So, this is the way in which the definitive character of resting in dharmata is done.

37. And because, with respect to that devoid of appearance,
What dc —as duality, formulation as such,
As faculties, objects, principles of awareness,
And as vessel-like worlds appearances -- not exist;
Are consequently cases of no observation,
No description, no ground, no appearance, no principles
Of awareness, no ground, which provides the criteria
For the traits defining the non-conceptual
Original wisdom described as in the sutras;

The second characteristic of dharmata is called "the definitive character." This is a discussion of the absence of appearances at the time of non-conceptual realization. This is taught in terms of the non-appearance of the six objects or stages of perception which begins with:

(1) The five doors. Because of the way our sense organs function, there arises a dualistic appearance of the object is perceived and the perceiver. However there is no such dualistic appearance by way of the consciousnesses that operate through the five doors of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body.

(2) Mental consciousness. There is no appearance of the sixth mental consciousness, which is conceptual.

(3) Sense powers. There is no apprehension of sense powers themselves, the physical bases that allow various consciousnesses and objects to meet.

(4) The five objects. There is no appearance of the five objects themselves (visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects).

(5) The six consciousnesses. The six consciousnesses themselves (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) do not appear.

(6) The world and the beings. There is no appearance of the world, the vessel or container, and the essence or inhabitants who dwell within this world.

In summary, when we are able to reach a state where we no longer see or "apprehend" appearances what we apprehend are the non-appearance within the nature of emptiness. In terms of "no observations," "no description," "no ground," "no appearance," "no principle of awareness," in the root text, the first of no observations means the absence of dualistic appearances or the absence of adding on something that isn't there. "No description" means the absence of any conceptual mind being unable through speech one could never show them to someone else, one could not demonstrate them to others by saying this or that about them. The phrase "no ground"

means they are without a source, in the sense that within meditative equipoise of non-appearance one understands the emptiness of the sense powers themselves, the sense powers that would serve as the sources for various consciousnesses. The phrase "non-appearance" means the non-appearance of the six objects just discussed.

This discussion originates in a sutra by the Buddha, in which he demonstrates six ways in which there is no appearance within meditative equipoise. No-knowing points to the absence of the six consciousnesses when one has realized dharmata. Finally, the non-appearance of the world and its inhabitants points to the absence of a place, i.e. one sees from the point of view of the non-establishment of the world and its inhabitants. All six of these qualities are in the sutras of the Buddha. We are in the discussion of the yoga of non-appearance or the yoga, which is without appearance. It is said that if one were to give an example, it would be like looking at the center of space. That is the characterization of the yoga that it is without appearance.

38. And because with respect to appearance phenomena all
As appearances equal the center of open space,
Since formations all are appearances like illusions.

The third division of the characteristics of dharmata is called "possessing appearance" in which we perceive all phenomena as being illusions. Even though phenomena are empty, when we are in meditative equipoise (Skt. *samadhi*) even at the level of without appearance, there is the increasing arising of appearance. This occurs even at the superior bodhisattva levels (levels 7 through 10) particularly on the path of seeing. At this level of the yoga without appearances the phenomena arises in the mind as an illusion. This means the appearances which seem solid and real to ordinary beings, appears as illusion to the bodhisattva at this level. At the highest tenth level of a buddha we attain the wisdom of the nature of phenomena (Tib. *ji ta ba*) and the wisdom of the variety of phenomena (Tib. *ji nye pa*) by seeing how these phenomena appear to other sentient beings.

E. THE BENEFITS OF NON-CONCEPTUAL WISDOM

39. The four points introducing the benefits
Include the complete attainment of dharmakaya,
Attainment of bliss which nothing can exceed,
Attainment of mastery over the power of insight,

Attainment of mastery over the power to teach.

The fifth topic is the benefits of having realized non-conceptual wisdom. There are four such benefits.

The first benefit that is achieved through non-conceptual wisdom is the dharmakaya in a complete form. Abandoning the obstructions of the disturbing emotions and also abandoning the obstructions to knowledge or omniscience. We also achieve the two qualities to a Buddha's wisdom: the *knowledge of the nature of phenomena* and the *knowledge of the varieties of phenomena.*

The second benefit is called "great happiness" (Skt. *mahasukha*). It is achieving a happiness that is greater than all others. Normally, the happiness that we have is quite changeable and not very stable. The great happiness or bliss that we achieve at this point is stable and unchanging.

The third benefit is that one sees everything in an unerring way, thus it is said that one achieves mastery with regard to insight.

Finally, after having achieved mastery with regard to insight, we are able to teach the path to others without teaching anything else. So, the fourth benefit is that on we achieve mastery with regard to teaching.

F. THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE
(1) THE BRIEF INTRODUCTION

40. The introduction to thorough understanding
Should be known to include the following four motifs:
A full understanding regarding the remedy,
A full understanding regarding the characteristics,
A full understanding regarding distinctive marks
And a full understanding regarding the five effects.

This is the brief explanation of the four aspects of what is called "thorough knowledge."

THE DETAILED COMMENTARY
(1) NON-CONCEPUTAL WISDOM AS AN ANTIDOTE

41. Of these what is understood to be remedy
Is non-conceptualizing original wisdom
Since perceiving phenomena, individuals,
An alteration as well as dichotomy,
Denial as well when this is entertained

Are five distinct forms of perception of non-existents
For which it is taught to comprise the remedy.

Non-conceptual wisdom is first an antidote to negative actions which something could serve as an antidote to the bad actions in which lead to suffering. The disturbing emotions and obscurations are the source of negative actions and it is non-conceptual wisdom, which can purify these negative actions and is therefore the antidote to them.

This is done because mistaken appearances of samsara appear to us, however, these phenomena are not actually real. Nevertheless, through our confusion we conceive of them as real things. For instance, we become attached to external appearances and think this is desirable and that's not. Similarly, we incorrectly regard our internal phenomena such as our thoughts and feelings as constituting a self. Therefore, we must abandon this misconception which is the antidote of non-conceptual wisdom.

One speaks about something that is called "complete change." This is regarding the self and external objects as permanent in the sense of not changing from moment to moment. The misconception of believing phenomena as permanent is a great mistake because it is a conception of self. From that point of view, recognizing that phenomena are indeed changeable and impermanent is quite helpful and leading us in the direction of dharmata. So, it is helpful to recognize phenomena as impermanent rather than as permanent. Nevertheless, to conceive that phenomena are newly produced and then cease is to be mistaken about their ultimate mode of abiding, their ultimate nature. Because, in fact, the ultimate nature of phenomena is that they lack inherent existence. From that point of view, it is not accurate to say that they are produced at some point, have a nature of impermanence and later cease. To regard them as permanent and then impermanent is called "a conception of phenomena as changeable." This conception needs to be abandoned.

Generally speaking, there are "phenomena" or dharma and "dharmata" or "the nature of phenomena." We tend to regard these as being separate, different things. When we begin to understand that phenomena have the nature of emptiness, we may begin to regard conventional appearances and ultimate emptiness as being separate, different. If we regard the conventional and the ultimate as separate and being contrary to one another, we have not realized emptiness accurately. Thus this conception of phenomena and their nature being separate is a conception that is to be abandoned.

The next misconception that needs to be abandoned is called "deprecation," meaning that we take emptiness of inherent existence to mean utter non-existence. We do not understand that emptiness is a suitability for phenomena to appear. This idea of emptiness being utter non-existence is a mistaken deprecation. The correct realization of the thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom serves as an antidote to such a misconception of emptiness.

We have identified five different misconceptions to which this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom serves as the antidote. These are: (1) a self of phenomena, (2) a self of individuals, (3) the misconception concerning the change that phenomena undergo, (4) the misconception that the conventional and the ultimate are separate or different, and (5) the misconception that emptiness denotes utter non-existence.

2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-CONCEPTUAL WISDOM

42. Full understanding regarding the characteristic:
A lack of the process of thought and correct transcendence,
Tranquilization, things in their composition,
And predetermination are the five,
The exclusion of which is the concrete characteristic.

The second topic concerns the characteristics of non-conceptual wisdom. This topic tries to clarify what non-conceptual wisdom is in terms of what it is. There are several states that seem to be non-conceptual wisdom so it also gives what non-conceptual wisdom is not. For example, there are mental states free from grasping and conceptualization that are not states of non-conceptual wisdom.

The first characteristic of non-conceptual wisdom is called "no mental application." What this refers to is states in which there is an absence of a very coarse conceptuality. This conceptuality is one in which a person is involved with various sorts of conventional designations that are set up by the world, i.e. conceptions that mix names and objects. For instance, an infant lacks that sort of conceptuality. In the books it says, "conception that regards terms and objects is suitable to be mixed;" by "terms" is meant various names for things and by "objects" is meant various sorts of functioning things in the world. Coarse conceptuality functions in this manner: It seems fine to put the name of something and the thing together, to just sort of paste them together. Now, a small child does not have such conceptuality, but the absence of that sort of

conceptuality is not what is meant by thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom.

The second characteristic of non-conceptual wisdom is called "correct transcendence." By practicing tranquillity meditation, we can develop "the four concentrations" that are the aspects of the form realm. In the first concentration we pacify a rough sort of examination called "investigation." To achieve the second concentration we pacify a more subtle type of examination called "analysis." From the second concentration onwards, we have pacified that sort of rough and subtle investigation and analysis respectively; they have been pacified and we have passed beyond them. However, that does not amount to the non-conceptuality when we say "thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom" on this occasion. The meditative concentrations and this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom are different in nature.

The third characteristic called "thorough pacification might be mistaken for thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom. What is indicated here is various states in which conceptuality has ceased as if it had been knocked out. For instance, when we enter into a very thick or deep sleep, there is very little conceptuality. However, such deep sleep is not what is meant by thorough non-conceptual wisdom. Similarly, there is a meditative state that is called "the meditative absorption of cessation" in which one enters into a completely mindless state. It's as if consciousness has completely stopped; there's no factor of luminous clarity whatsoever, as if one's mind has just been canceled. However, that's not what is meant by thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom because thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom realizes the way in which all phenomena abide, i.e. the dharmata, and the above mentioned states are not a case of realizing that dharmata.

The fourth characteristic that might be taken to be non-conceptuality is various things that are indeed non-conceptual, for instance, visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects such as stones and buildings. Indeed, these phenomena have no conceptuality, but that's not what is meant by non-conceptual wisdom which has the nature of prajna or "intelligence." Non-conceptual wisdom has a factor of luminosity or clarity, whereas material phenomena doesn't have this.

The fifth mistaken understanding of non-conceptuality is called "predetermination." For example, when the Indian master Kamalashila traveled to Tibet to debate the Chinese master Hashang, he found that Hashang was telling his students, "I teach a sudden path. Up to this point you have been practicing a gradual path, but

this sudden path that I'm presenting is better. The way it is better is like this: Whether you have white clouds in the sky or black clouds in the sky, they both block the sun. Similarly, whether you have virtuous thoughts or unvirtuous thoughts, both are obstacles and for that reason the meditation that you ought to practice," Hashang was saying, to abandon all thoughts, virtuous and unvirtuous, whatsoever. If we were talking about the practice of shamatha, then what Hashang taught is fine. However, there is no aspect of vipashyana or "insight" in that kind of meditation because underneath is the conception, "I must hold my mind without any thoughts whatsoever." Non-conceptual wisdom has passed beyond that state entirely.

So non-conceptual wisdom that we are describing is non-conceptual in a rather different way from the five different non-conceptual points just described. All of these five do indeed satisfy the mere meaning of non-conceptual, but they are not non-conceptual in the sense of wisdom because wisdom passes far beyond such states since those states have not realized the dharmata. Thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom is a direct perception, a realization of dharmata, not just some sort of cessation in the way material phenomena are non-conceptual.

(3) FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DISTINCTIVE MARKS

43. Completely understanding its marks involves
Its being free of conceptualization as such,
The fact that it is not transitional,
Its not remaining while being perennial,
Its hallmark of being completely unexcelled,
Which constitute its five distinctive marks.

There are five features of non-conceptual wisdom:

First, it is free of conceptualization. It does not involve any conception of samsara as something that is to be abandoned and nirvana as something that is to be taken up. Rather, non-conceptual wisdom has transcended these conceptions.

Second, it is not trivial. Rather, it is realization of the final nature of all phenomena, realization of how all phenomena exist and thereby enables the discarding what is to be abandoned and the realization of whatever is to be realized, the completion of all good qualities. In that way, it is not trivial.

Third, it does not abide in any extreme of existence, i.e. samsara, nor any extreme of peace, i.e. nirvana. It is not a case of being

confused and therefore bound in samsara nor is it a case of being frightened and therefore seeking release into nirvana. It is not covered by any of those faults, rather it is the source of great benefit to all sentient beings. It is said that thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom does not abide either in existence nor in peace.

Fourth, it is stable. Non-conceptual wisdom has not been manufactured by one's own mind and from that point of view the fourth feature of superiority is said to be steady or stable, i.e. having realized in this way the way in which all phenomena abide, one does not later fall back into confusion. In that sense, when we regard the dharmakaya as the fruition or effect, we can say that it is a permanent entity or permanent nature in the sense that there is no falling back from it into confusion.

Fifth, this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom is not surpassed by anything else. It is not the case that when one has arrived at such thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom that there is some further destination to which one needs to go, rather this is the final accomplishment and there is nothing else that needs to be accomplished; there is nothing beyond it.

So, these are the five features of distinctive superiority of thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom.

(4) A FULL UNDERSTANDING

(A) THE EFFECTS OF NON-CONCEPTUAL WISDOM

44. The last, the full understanding of its effects,
Includes its lasting effect on conceptualization,
Its affording a happiness unsurpassable,
Its effecting elimination of obscurations —
Afflicted emotions and obscuration of knowledge;
The original wisdom attained in the wake of this
Provides the access to every aspect of knowledge,
Enables achieving attunement with Buddha fields,
The thorough maturation of sentient beings,
Makes viable the revelation, transmission
Of omniscience itself in its manifold of aspects;
These five are the special features of the effects.

The fourth topic of non-conceptual wisdom is called "the activity of non-conceptual wisdom." Having realized the dharmata our confusion is overcome and our conceptuality is cast far away,

i.e. it is just destroyed. When we talk about the way in which various causes lead to effects we talk about five different types of effects.

The first effect of overcoming conceptuality is called "an effect that is made by a being" in somewhat the way that a craftsman could actually make something, so there is some similarity in that this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom simply destroys conceptuality. From that point of view, one could regard the abandonment of conceptuality as an effect that has been made by a being.

The second effect of this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom is called "unsurpassable happiness" which is happiness that is beyond change. In an ordinary way we have various experiences of happiness and pleasure, however they deteriorate and then suffering comes, so there is a great deal of change. However, when one has separated from conceptuality by way of thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom, then one's mind does not fluctuate. From that point of view, one has achieved an unsurpassable happiness and unsurpassable pleasure. Because it is the very nature of the situation, because it is a nature that is itself pleasant, it is said to be a dominant effect from among these five types of effects.

The third effect is the elimination of obscurations. Having realized the way in which all phenomena exist and having given birth to thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom, then those phenomena that are to be abandoned are indeed abandoned and one's obscurations with regard to the dharmata are overcome. From that point of view, it is said that the obstructions with regard to knowledge or the obstructions to omniscience have been overcome; one has separated from them. Obstructions to omniscience on this particular occasion means conceiving things, conceiving of existent phenomena. From that point of view, we could say that all of our thoughts whatsoever, all of this conceptuality is obstruction to knowledge or obstruction to omniscience. In dependence upon such conceptions coming forth in a much more coarse or gross way and leading to more coarse conceptions and various sorts of afflicted states of whatever sort, that's the way in which one comes to have emotional obstructions or obstructions to liberation. However, this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom destroys both of these obstructions, the obstructions to omniscience and the emotional obstructions. It enables one to part away from them. From that point of view, in our discussion of different sorts of effects, this particular effect of thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom is called "separative effect," in the sense that these twofold obstructions are abandoned through the force of that wisdom.

The fourth type of effect is called "an effect that accords with the cause." This thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom sees dharmata and by way of that thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom abides inseparably with phenomena and knows their final nature; it sees dharmata. It sees all objects of knowledge and, as we saw before, this is in the manner of the two aspects of a Buddha's wisdom, a wisdom knowing the nature or mode of phenomena and a wisdom knowing the variety or extent of phenomena. So, from this point of view of seeing the nature of all phenomena and abiding inseparability with them in this way, it is said to be an effect that accords with its cause.

The fifth effect is the function, the activity of this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom, is called "thorough ripening" in the sense that by way of this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom one purifies the Buddha field in which one will become a Buddha and there teaches sentient beings. It does not just purify such a Buddha field, but it ripens sentient beings who have faith; it naturally ripens them. Moreover, it enters such sentient beings into the good path of the dharma in the sense of bestowing the dharma to sentient beings. Thus, from this point of view it is said that this thoroughly non-conceptual wisdom has the three qualities of purifying, ripening and completing the welfare of sentient beings. This is what is meant by "thorough ripening."

Questions

Question: When one directly realizes the ultimate, does that mean that conventional phenomena just become non-existent or go away?
Rinpoche: As for appearances of conventionalities or conventional appearances, for beginners in deed when in this state of meditative equipoise in which the mind is set evenly, fully and in a balanced manner upon the ultimate, such conventional appearances do disappear. However, when the dharmata has become fully and completely manifest, they do not. Finally, just while things are empty they appear and right when they appear, just when they appear, they are at that time empty. If it were not that way, then it would be the case that emptiness on the one hand and appearance on the other were contrary. Are those two contrary? No, they are not. It is not thus necessary that the dawning of one entails the disappearance of the other. Temporarily as one is moving along the path that is the state, but in the end no: they dawn together.

Question: Are the shamatha states not to be confused with non-conceptual wisdom when it comes to investigation and analysis? Would you say something about what is being investigated and analyzed and faults that can arise?

Rinpoche: There is a factor of such investigation and analysis in all conceptuality. In sutra it is said that investigation is *togpa* and analysis is *jöpa*. The former, which is called "investigation," is of a very coarse sort. An example of that would be from a distance you are not sure whether it is a pile of stones or whether it is actually a human being; it's hard to tell. You are way off and wonder, "Is it somebody or is it just some stones that look like a human being?" That's what we mean by coarse investigation. Whereas, detailed analysis means coming up closely and looking very carefully, saying, "Well, it is or it isn't." The sorts of meditative stabilization's or samadhi, about which we are speaking in this particular context (the states of concentration starting with the second concentration on up from there) are free from such coarse investigation and detailed analysis, rather one simply abides in a luminous and clear state in which those are absent.

Question: Does that mean that if one were abiding in the luminous and clear state, one wouldn't look to see whether there was a pile of stones or a human being? One would just rest in not knowing?

Rinpoche: Yes, that's exactly what it means. One would rest without investigating or analyzing external phenomena, rather one would simply dwell in a peaceful state within meditation. Now if we were talking about the meditation of the secret mantra-vajrayana, such meditative practices are not much concerned with these four concentrations. One doesn't not perceive in terms of such a series of meditations or such stages of meditation, rather one cultivates a factor of stability and the introduction to the nature of the mind comes in terms of such a factor of stability. In the sutra tradition, however, there is a great deal of discussion about those four concentrations and the way in which one proceeds through them, by way of them, to realization of the final nature of things. However here in this context, in terms of what one actually practices, in this vajrayana practice, one does not proceed in that way, rather a mere shamatha is adequate and the introduction to the nature of mind is made in terms of that mere factor of stability.

Chapter 8

Mental Cultivation in the Transformation of Dharma into Dharmata

The discussion of how one's state is thoroughly transformed from dharma to dharmata is enumerated in ten different topics. This is through mental cultivation or we could say meditation. Up to this point we have discussed six of these topics and now we will begin with the seventh.

(G) MEDITATION IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF DHARMA INTO DHARMATA

45. The introduction to mental cultivation
For individuals wishing to cross the threshold
Into original non-conceptual wisdom
For any bodhisattva, awakening hero,
This is the way to cultivate the mind:
Because the suchness yet remains unknown,
The so-called 'store of all seeds' of untrue imputation
Is the cause of appearance of two which do not exist.
And with that as support there are grounds for diversification,
Due to which the cause and effects as well,
In spite of appearing still do not exist.

46. With that appearing pure being does not appear.
Through that not appearing pure being indeed appears.
Through such cultivation of mind when properly done
The bodhisattva steps across the brink
Into original non-conceptual wisdom.

47. Through focusing thus mere awareness is focused on,
Through which there are no referents to focus on.
Through there being no referents that could be focused on
There is no such mere awareness to focus on.
Through that not existing on which to focus, the verge
Is crossed into focusing free of this twofold division.

48. No split into two existing, on which to focus.
This is original non-conceptual wisdom.
Since this is what is defined with the utmost precision
With respect to involving no object, no focusing,
No attributes on which to focus at all.

Mental cultivation deals with how something is changed, its condition before the transformation and the way in which the transformation takes place.

Those bodhisattvas who wish to meditate on non-conceptual wisdom need to understand that we wander in samsara because we do not understand how phenomena exist and we need to understand reality or dharmata to achieve liberation.

Ordinary persons who do not understand dharmata, i.e. the way in which all phenomena exists become involved with that which is not true which leads to confusion which causes false appearances to arise.

Our mind has a nature of emptiness, nevertheless, it is at the same time very clear, extremely luminous and unceasing. Because of this luminous clarity, various thoughts arise and we therefore become involved in confusion. It's like a drawing or painting. Generally speaking, we do not mistake a painting for the object portrayed in the painting. However, if the painting is extremely good our eyes can be deceived and gradually, as we become more and more accustomed and involved with it, we take the painting to be real. In the same way, the very vivid clarity of our own mind leads to us confusing the appearance with something real and we become involved in confusion.

Our mind as empty is homogenous, without differentiation. However, mind as luminous clarity has differences, namely, the eight consciousnesses. The foundation of these eight consciousnesses is the eighth alaya consciousness. In the words of the root text here, this is referred to as "the store of all the seeds." This refers to the fact that the various predispositions or latencies have entered this alaya consciousness and later they return as various appearances. If these predispositions that have entered the alaya consciousness are good, then the appearances to the mind will, accordingly, be something good. If, on the other hand, these predispositions are of a bad nature, then the appearances to which they give rise are ugly and painful in nature. So, the root of all appearances is this alaya consciousness.

This confusion begins when the six consciousnesses make contact with the six types of sensory expressions—sight, sound, small, etc. This contact of the external object and the internal consciousnesses causes appearances to arise. Even though phenomena are empty, from the eight alaya consciousness arise the six consciousnesses which give rise to appearances.

When these appearances are mistaken for being real i.e., not empty which is their true nature, confusion of samsara arises. However, if the true nature of these appearances is realized to be empty, i. e. as dharmata these mistaken appearances are abandoned and the bodhisattva develops non-conceptual wisdom.

The discussion above of contrasting appearances with dharmata is given in the way it is presented in the sutras. On this path the emptiness of phenomena is realized through extensive analytical reasoning. In the vajrayana, particularly in mahamudra and dzogchen meditation, we go about this differently by using direct perception of mind. In the vajrayana we do not emphasize external appearances, but rather look at internal mind. This method does not require extraordinary exertion of many eons of many lifetimes of practice, rather we look at dharmata as undifferentiated from our own mind. In this system external appearances are not negated as they would be by another path.

In the meditation of the vajrayana appearances are not negated. In this text, it says that when dharmata is seen, then the various appearances as external phenomena do not appear and are not seen and when those external appearances are seen, then dharmata is not seen. However, the procedure that we have just been discussing, is different and through that procedure we see dharmata or mind itself and as a result the appearances of other phenomena are not stopped. So, that is the difference between these two approaches.

Within dharmata, the alaya consciousness appears. Within this consciousness, there are various appearances. In just that way, all phenomena are observed as mind only; they are understood as merely the appearance of mind and we understand them to be empty. Similarly, we see that the internal mind is empty and we also understand both the appearances and the mind perceiving these appearances are the same, both lack any nature of their own.

Seeing the lack of any difference between the external appearances and the internal mind is called "non-conceptual wisdom." Because there is no way to identify anything by saying, "It's such and such." There's no identification of anything as good or as bad.

This is why we say non-conceptual wisdom does not observe signs in any way. With non-conceptual wisdom all appearances are recognized as being just appearances of mind. In terms of that realization, we realize the emptiness.

This is how the emptiness of any inherent existence is presented as a principal point. However, it's not that only emptiness has been discussed, presented or demonstrated, rather it is also shown that appearances are just mind. Because of how the Buddha taught, two different traditions or systems of explaining the nature of phenomena developed. The Buddha turned three wheels of dharma, the first was known as the hinayana. In the middle turning, the Buddha emphasized emptiness and in the final turning of the wheel of dharma Buddha emphasized that appearances are only mind and that mind itself does not exist inherently. So, the presentation of two different ways of talking about the nature of things in this text meets back to the different presentations that the Buddha made.

Determining that emptiness is the nature of phenomena by reasoning is an extremely good way to go about it; but it is a long path. To go about it in this way is extremely good, for one separates from all grasping and conceptuality. Still, if we want an introduction of direct perception to this emptiness, there is no method for quickly and directly introducing doing such. However, we can look directly at to the way in which the mind rests and that is the method presented in the mahamudra and dzogchen tradition. In this way, appearances are realized to be mind and mind is realized as emptiness. There is no method for being directly introduced to the emptiness of the nature of phenomenal appearances.

As it is, we have never really looked at our own mind. From beginningless time we have just not looked to see what our mind really is. We have just gone along in a casual way, being confused about it, thinking, "Well, I have a mind. It does exist. It has this and that quality and it is something that is extremely potent." However, when we look asking, "Where is my mind? What is my mind?," then we don't see much of anything. If we look, there isn't a whole lot to be seen.

Similarly, if we look intensively at mind, we don't see anything. Why is it that we don't find anything? Is it because we do not know how to look? Is it because we do not know where to look? Is it because our mind is transparent like water so we can't see it? Or is it because our mind is too small to see? No, when we look, we simply don't find anything. The reason why we don't find anything is that our mind doesn't really exist. It is, in fact, just the nature of

dharmata. This is discovered not through reasoning and analysis; but by just looking right at it.

As we talked about before, we examine external phenomena by looking for the hand for instance and ask, "Where is this hand? Is the thumb the hand? Are the fingers the hand?" We then think, "Yes, emptiness is probably the truth of the matter." But, we don't have to do that when we look at our mind. We just look for our mind, "Where is it?" In that way, we see emptiness directly.

Does that mean that it's just nothing whatsoever. If we don't find anything because mind doesn't really exist, does that mean that we are just a lifeless corpse? No, even though we don't find anything when we look for our mind, nevertheless we know that there is what is called "luminous clarity." If we then look for that luminous clarity, we don't find anything. We discover while the mind is luminous and clear, it is also empty and just when it is empty, it is luminous and clear.

So we experience through meditation these things that can be discovered through reasoned analysis and arrive at the same thing. These topics are explained in the treatises and the experience at which we arrive at through the practice of mahamudra meet at one point, come down to one thing.

Chart
The Five Paths

1. Path of Accumulation	Practices Mindfulness Recognizes the Four Marks of Existence (impermance, absence of a self, suffering, and emptiness). Practices Four Renunciations Four Practices of Concentrative Absorption (strong interest, perserverance, intentiveness, and investigation)
2. Path of Application	Five Controlling Powers (confidence, sustained effort, mindfulness, samadhi, and prajna). These powers become "unshakable" at the end of this path.
3. Path of Insight	One attains the first bodhisattva level of perceiving emptiness. Develops true awareness of the Four Noble Truths and their 16 aspects. Develops the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (memory, investi-investigation of meaning and values, effort, joy, refinement and serenity, samadhi, and equanimity).
4. Path of Cultivation (Meditation)	One goes through the 2nd to 10th bodhisattva levels. One practices the eight-fold Noble Path (right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelyhood, right effort, right, and right meditation).
5. Path of Fulfillment	This is Buddhahood.

Chapter 9

The Bodhisattva Levels and the Five Paths

(H) THE LEVELS THROUGH PRACTICE

49. The penetration of levels through application
Should be known to include the following four degrees:
Through intense application involving informed commitment
This level, called "training by way of informed commitment",

50. Comprises the stage of definitive verification.
Through application of true concrete realization

51. Of the levels, the first is the stage, the precise is encountered;
Through intense application employing meditation
The impure levels as well as the purified three
Are what comprise the stage of recollection.

52. Through application involving final perfection
The spontaneous deeds of a Buddha are uninterrupted;
Hence this is the stage of immersion into the core.

The eighth point of the transformation of dharma into dharmata is a discussion of the bodhisattva levels (Skt. *bhumi*, Tib. *sa*) and the five paths (Skt. *marga*, Tib. *lam*). The text presents four levels that we go through.

The first stage encompasses the first two of the five paths and it is called here the level of longing (Tib. *möpa*). At this stage which covers the first path of preparation, we haven't realized emptiness yet directly, but we intellectually understand emptiness and have the aspiration to meditate on it. This leads to the second level of connection in which we actually meditate on emptiness.

The second stage is called the stage of definitive verification and this encompasses the third path of seeing. At this stage we actually arrive at direct realization of emptiness. This level is also the level of the first bodhisattva level.

The third stage is called the path of meditation and at this stage we do indeed realize emptiness directly. Even though we see emptiness, we still have a great many predispositions or latencies to which we have become very accustomed. Because of the strength of these predispositions, after seeing dharmata it is covered over and we become confused again. What can help? Meditation. The Tibetan word for meditation, *gom*, which is closely related to and has very much the sense of another Tibetan word that says *khom*, which means "to familiarize and to become accustomed to it." Up to this point, what we have been accustomed to is confusion, so we have to become accustomed to non-confusion, so that through meditation we have to become accustomed to dharmata. The process of getting used to dharmata encompasses the fourth path of meditation. This also comprises the first six impure bodhisattva levels. These six are called "impure levels" from the point of view of still comprising mistaken views and having disturbing emotions.

Next come the three pure bodhisattva levels, at which confusion and disturbing emotions have been for the most part abandoned and we arrive very close to the level of a buddha. These nine levels, ranging from the second to the tenth, are called "the occasion of subsequent mindfulness." Over those nine bodhisattva levels our realization and familiarity with dharmata is increasing and, from that point of view, we are getting used to what we have already seen; it is called "the period of subsequent mindfulness."

Now we will speak about the fourth way that it is laid out in this presentation.

The fourth stage is called "The stage of immersion into the core" and is the path of final perfection, which is the state of Buddhahood. Its nature is that we see the existence of all phenomena completely. Through seeing this, confusion and confused appearances are understood to lack inherent existence. Through understanding their lack of inherent existence then, the negative emotions and ignorance are abandoned naturally. By abandoning the afflictions and ignorance, wisdom increases.

As was explained, we develop this non-conceptual wisdom further. Also, we know clearly, without mistaking the conventional appearances that are undifferentiable from dharmata. We possess the wisdom that knows the nature of phenomena and the wisdom that knows the variety of phenomena. With these two wisdoms, one knows the way in which things appear to all sentient beings. Through knowing both truths one realizes just what suffering and difficulties sentient beings have and how they get involved in such

suffering. This creates an extraordinary tender love for all sentient beings.

Such tender love leads to a capacity to help sentient beings, using the two qualities of a Buddha's wisdom and strong wish to help others from suffering is a compassionate attitude, is a compassion with the ability to help others. One has this ability because the basic problem sentient beings experience is simply that of being mistaken and confused view. Being in error, this can be corrected through having understood that, it is suitable to cast off that difficult situation. If one doesn't know it, then one cannot do anything about it, but if one does, then it is indeed possible to extricate oneself. At a given time one might not be able to help a particular sentient being, nevertheless, gradually, over a period of time, one will be able to help all people.

Because of the three aspects of a Buddha's wisdom—knowledge, compassion and capacity—the enlightened activity of a Buddha comes forth. This enlightened activity has two aspects: its continuum is never cut and it is spontaneous. When we say that it is spontaneous, we mean that it does not require any exertion on the part of the Buddha. The way in which a Buddha enters into such activity is that the difficult situation in which sentient beings find themselves is a situation that can indeed be overcome. If one does abandon it, then there is a great advantage to do that. If one does not, then great suffering follows. A Buddha understands the situation of sentient beings and from that point of view he leads sentient beings to the path to Buddhahood. In this way, a Buddha engages in enlightened activity both naturally and spontaneously.

The enlightened activity of a Buddha is not only spontaneous, but it is also unceasing, that is to say, a Buddha is always involved in helping sentient beings and the number of sentient beings is inconceivable. The reason for the unceasing activity of a Buddha is that all sentient beings can eventually enter into the genuine path and achieve liberation. It's not the case that there are some sentient beings who have the good fortune to reach enlightenment and others who will never do so. If some sentient beings can not achieve enlightenment, then a Buddha would help those who could and his work would be done. However, since everyone eventually encounters the fortunate situation in which they are able to progress along the path, a Buddha's activity never ends.

A Buddha has great compassion for all sentient beings without any exception. Some people think that since a Buddha feels compassion for sentient beings and sees their situation of suffering clearly, then a Buddha must feel pain on account of continually and

very vividly seeing the suffering of sentient beings. It's not, however, that way. Of course a Buddha does see all sentient beings and their suffering vividly. At the same time, a Buddha has the capacity to eventually protect all sentient beings from suffering. So, a Buddha thinks, "Today I was able to help this person" and the next day, "I was able to help two people today" and the Buddha knows, as time goes on that he or she will be able to protect all sentient beings from suffering and help them reach enlightenment. From that point of view, a Buddha feels great joy and therefore, a Buddha's compassion does not have an aspect of suffering, rather it is of great joy.

Questions

Question: What is the difference between illusion-like appearance for someone who has achieved a path of seeing or a path of meditation and has illusion-like appearance at the time of what is called post-meditation? What is the difference between such illusion-like appearance and merely thinking, without having achieved that level, merely thinking, "All of these things are just illusion?"
Rinpoche: Not all that much. It is just understanding something to be a certain way. From studying the text, we can understand that all phenomena are like illusions and that's not terribly different from what a superior person understands. However, there is the difference of whether it is based upon experience or not. For someone who does not have such experience, *nyam-myongs*, i.e. to say that all phenomena are like illusions, is merely from the point of view of knowledge or prajna, from the point of view of intelligence, a sharp knowledge of things. We could say, "All phenomena are emptiness" or "All phenomena are like illusions," but without such experience, it's just knowledge. However, when someone who has realized emptiness in direct perception, who has seen emptiness in a non-mediated way, then later, when various appearances arise again, that person takes them to be just like illusions and does so from the point of view of having actual experience. Now later, when one arrives at what are called "the pure grounds" (the eighth, ninth and tenth bodhisattva grounds), one experiences emptiness and dependent arising in union. However, one does not experience such a union of emptiness and dependent arising at these early stages, such as the path of seeing. At that time, at the path of seeing, what one has is a definite knowledge or certainty that arises from experience.

Question: Does one have a certainty or definite knowledge with regard to illusion-like appearance at the time of the subsequent achievement of the path of seeing, such a certainty that arises from experience?
Rinpoche: Yes, because the path of seeing is experience.
Question: In other texts they talk about achieving such levels as Guru Rinpoche, who could actually put his hand through pillars and so on. It's more than anything intellectual. The world is an illusion, I guess, if you can put your hand through rocks.
Rinpoche: Guru Rinpoche's putting his hand through a rock or pillar is a sign of appearance and mind having become mixed. For instance, at Gampopa's monastery there's a pillar that has a gap in it. This came about when a student asked Gampopa, "What does it mean when one says the mixing of mind and appearance?" And Gampopa said, "It's like this!" Ever since that time there has been a gap in that pillar. This is what happens as one proceeds beyond the path of seeing and mind and appearance become actually mixed.
Question: Would you say something about the difference between non-established, not truly existent and non-existence?
Rinpoche: First of all, as for the word "non-existent" is *medpa* in Tibetan. It can have two different meanings. Sometimes "non-existent" refers to emptiness, i.e. the final nature of all phenomena. Sometimes it just means that something isn't there. For instance, if you say, "I don't have any money," then that non-existence of money for oneself is not a case of the final nature of things. The term "not truly established" (*denpa matrub*) mainly refers to emptiness in that one is pointing to the falsity of other things, that other phenomena exist through the force of or in the manner of not being true; they are false. In this way one is pointing to emptiness. As for the term "not established" (*matrub*), it is pretty much the same as the term "not truly established." Tsongkapa, the founder of the Gelugpa tradition, said many times in his writings that one must add on this qualification "truly" when one speaks about the way in which things exist; one has to say "not truly existing or established" rather than just "not established." He said this many times, that this particular qualification was necessary. Many other scholars have said that it's okay not to affix that qualification "truly" and there has been a lot of debate about whether one has to say "not truly established" or whether it is okay to just say "not established." It's not at all that important because they pretty much mean the same thing.

Chapter 10

The Benefits of the Transformation Of Dharma into Dharmata

(I) DISADVANTAGES OF THERE BEING NO TRANSFORMATION

53. The introduction to disadvantages
Includes the four which would follow as a result
Of there being no transformation, including the flaw
That preventing afflictions' entry would lack a support,
The flaw of the path's introduction lacking support,
The flaw of there being no basis of imputation
For speaking of individuals reaching nirvana,
As well as the flaw of no basis of imputation
For distinctions between three forms of enlightenment.

The ninth point of the transfer of dharma into dharmata is the disadvantages of there not being any transformation. This refers to the fact that various unfavorable situations do not come about after one has transformed one's state, place or condition. There are four points here.

The first point is that disturbing emotions do not return after they have been abandoned. If disturbing emotions were to return, they are very harmful. However, for the bodhisattvas having realized dharmata and developed non-conceptual wisdom, the disturbing emotions do not return. They don't return because the disturbing emotions are themselves a state of falseness and confusion. Once that has been understood, then they just fall away and don't come back.

The second unfavorable situation that does not come about is the wearing out of the effectiveness of the antidotes to the disturbing emotions. However, there is no extinguishing of the potency of the path. The reason is that the disturbing emotions are themselves mistaken and the wisdom is genuine, not false. Since it is true, it is never used up or finished.

The third point is that there is no returning to former states. This non-returning to one's former state and having fears and doubts thinking that one might fall back was discussed by the great Indian master Dharmakirti. He illustrated it in terms of two examples: If we start with a pot of water, heat it and bring it to boil, eventually the water becomes cold again. Similarly, if we apply fire to gold, it melts. But once we take the heat away, the gold returns to a solid state. We might think that no matter how much we purify and purify our condition, eventually we would just fall back into the condition we had been in before. But, the situation is not like that of heated water and gold because the nature of gold is a solid and the nature of water is cold and a liquid. So these two substances simply return to their original nature, however, that's not the same with the disturbing emotions, confusion and samsara. The disturbing emotions, confusion, and samsara are advantigious stains and mistaken views which view both of which are not part of the original nature of dharmata.

The fourth point is the unfavorable condition of regression from of not knowing everything, a Buddha's omniscience. We might think, "Well, it's not possible to know everything." And we might compare that with someone who is training in jumping who can indeed learn to jump further and further. However, eventually, the jumper will reach the limit of how far he can jump. We might think, "Well, it's like that. I can develop a great deal of knowledge and good qualities and so forth, but I cannot learn everything."

However, the situation is actually of a different nature and indeed such omniscience does exist. There are two reasons why omniscience does arise. The first reason is that the jumping is something that is done with the body and the body is composed of particles; for that reason there is a limit to what it can do. Mind is of different nature; it is of the nature of luminous clarity and there is no limit to its ability to know. When one realizes the dharmata, then one naturally knows all conventional phenomena that appear within dharmata.

The second reason it is possible to achieve omniscience is that it is appropriate that we would pass beyond the confusion and hardship of cyclic existence; achieve release of nirvana. Since it is appropriate to pass beyond samsara and to achieve nirvana, omniscience is possible.

(J) THE BENEFITS OF THE TRANSFORMATION

54. The introduction into the benefits
Which are the reverse, should be known under four motifs.

The tenth and last topic of the transformation of dharma into dharmata is the advantages of having transformed one's state into that of wisdom. This relates to the previous ninth topic about the disadvantages in regard to the possibility of abandoning disturbing emotions without them returning, achieving an antidote that does not become exhausted, and the two aspects of the possibility of achieving omniscience. There's another side to it, namely that we can indeed abandon the disturbing emotions. The antidote is not of the nature that suffers from exhaustion and we can achieve nirvana and become a Buddha.

To summarize the benefits of this transformation are: (1) The absence of the disturbing emotions, (2) the presence of the antidotes, (3) the absence of returning to former states, and (4) the absence of not knowing everything.

Chart

The Bodhisattva Levels

1. The Joyous One (rab tu dga' ba) (rab tu dga' ba)	Emphasis on generosity (sbyin pa)
2. The Stainless One (dri ma med pa)	Emphasis on discipline (tsultrim)
3. The Illuminating One ('od byed pa)	Emphasis on patience (bzod pa)
4. The Flaming One ('od 'phro ba)	Emphasis on exertion (bzod pa)
5. The One Difficult to Conquer (shin tu sbyang dka' ba)	Emphasis on samadhi
6. The Manifest One (mngon du gyur ba)	Emphasis on wisdom (sherab)
7. The Far Going one (ring du song pa)	Emphasis on skilful activity (thabs la mkhas pa).
8. The Unshakable One (mi gyo ba) (smob lam)	Emph. on future projection
9. The One of Good Discrimination (legs pa'i blo gros)	Emphasis on efficacy (stobs)
10. Cloud of Dharma (chos kyi sprin)	Attaining enlightened wisd. (ye shes)

Chapter 11

The Conclusion

V. THE CONCLUSION
A. THE COMPATIBILITY OF DHARMA AND DHARMATA

55. To show how phenomena non-existent appear,
They are likened to dream and compare to illusion and so on;
To illustrate the total transformation
To space it is likened to gold and water and so on.

We have arrived at the conclusion of the discussion of the dharma and dharmata. The way in which these two are compatible with one another, is set forth in this last chapter. This is explained in terms of three examples.

The first example tries to explain how phenomena (dharma) do not ultimately exist, that is, it is empty; but yet it still appears to us. This is described in the example of a dream, an illusion or a mirage. Dreams, illusions and mirages don't actually exist and yet they appear just because they do not exist, while not existing; right at that time, indeed, they appear. Similarly, the phenomena of cyclic existence do not exist, nevertheless within not existing, they appear.

The second example illustrates the transformation of one's ordinary knowledge into a state of non-conceptual wisdom. What example is suitable to show the ultimate? Indeed in the beginning, there are faults, defects, but one can separate from those part ways. An example for that would be like clouds in the sky. Sometimes there are clouds in the sky, but that is not the nature of the sky. It is quite suitable for these clouds to just pass away and for sky and clouds to part ways because the nature of the sky is to be really free of clouds. Similarly, gold might become rusted, but rust is not the nature of gold; it is suitable for gold to be restored to its pure state.

The third example illustrates how one can possess dharmata, yet it isn't apparent as an ordinary being. Water can become quite dirty, but the dirt is not the nature of water, because dirt and water have different natures and water can be restored to purity.

Because the two have different natures, the purity of the water can be restored such as letting the water stand.

phenomena of samsara, rather it is appropriate for the situation to become pure.

This is the end of the ten topics.

B. THE AUTHOR OF THE TEXT

56. The verses distinguishing phenomena and pure being composed by the guardian Maitreya are herewith concluded.

57. The Kashmiri Khenpo, Mahdzana, and the Tibetan translator, Shama Lotsawa Gelong Senge Gyaltsen, collaborated in translating this (from Sanskrit into Tibetan) and in correcting their work, thus providing this finalized version.

Generally speaking, at the great monastic universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila in India, from which came the teachings of the Buddha-dharma and these were spread widely, various sorts of treatises were composed. Among the different people who studied at these monastic universities, there were some who were able to compose treatises and some who were not. Some were the best, some were fair and some were poor. What are the characteristics of those three groups? The best ones to compose treatises are those who see dharmata directly, those who have profound realization. The middle group are those who practiced the Manjushri practice and were able to meet with Manjushri. The lowest group are those who are skilled in five topics of knowledge and could compose treatises, but they are the lowest of the three.

This particular treatise that we have been studying is particularly distinguished because it was composed by someone who saw dharmata directly and dwelled in the tenth bodhisattva level. This makes this treatise of the highest kind.

So, I wanted to explain to you why, I chose this particular treatise to teach. What is explained in this text is the way in which one arrives at an inferential realization just what dharmata (the nature of all phenomena) is. At the same time, there is a very powerful relationship between what is taught here and the practice of meditation of students, namely, dharmata. This dharmata discussed in this text is the same as the mind's way of resting, the mind's nature, and therefore it is related with the practice of meditation, in that what we meditate upon is just this mind's nature. Through such meditation, we arrive at the final result and for that

reason meditation is extremely important. That's why I have chosen this text.

In earlier times it was said by various accomplished persons that to realize these great commentaries we must receive the oral instructions. That's the important point: What one has learned and what has been taught in this book can indeed direct one's practice. So, please practice in that way.

All of you have spent a lot of money, gone a long way and gone through many difficulties in order to hear this teaching. Thank you very much. I am going to offer an aspiration prayer at this point, a prayer of good wishes, and as I am doing so, please set your mind in that way. Particularly, it's a time of warfare, so thinking in that way, set your mind in good wishes.

The Glossary

Abhidharma (Tib. *chö ngön pa*) The Buddhist teachings are often divided into the Tripitaka: the sutras (teachings of the Buddha), the vinaya (teachings on conduct,) and the abhidharma which are the analyses of phenomena that exist primarily as a commentarial tradition to the Buddhist teachings. There is not, in fact, an abhidharma section within the Tibetan collection of the Buddhist teachings.

afflicted consciousness (Tib. *nyön yid*) The seventh consciousness. As used here it has two aspects: the immediate consciousness which monitors the other consciousnesses making them continuous and the klesha consciousness which is the continuous presence of self. See consciousnesses, eight.

afflictions These are another name for the kleshas or negative emotions. See kleshas

aggregates, five (Skt. *skandha*, Tib. *phung po nga*) Literally "heaps," These are the five basic transformations that perceptions undergo when an object is perceived. First is form which includes all sounds, smells, etc. everything that is not thought. The second and third are sensations (pleasant and unpleasant, etc.) and identification. Fourth is mental events which actually include the second and third aggregates. The fifth is ordinary consciousness such as the sensory and mental consciousnesses.

alaya consciousness (Tib. *kün shi nam she*) According to the Yogacara school this is the eighth consciousness and is often called the ground consciousness or store-house consciousness.

Asanga (Tib. *thok mé)* A fourth century Indian philosopher who founded the Chittamatra or Yogacara school and wrote the five works of Maitreya which are important mahayana works. Also brother of Vasubhandu.

Atishha (982-1055 C.E.) Was a Buddhist scholar at Vikramashhila University in India and came to Tibet at the invitation of the King to overcome the damage done by King Langdarma. He helped found the Kadam tradition.

ayatanas (Tib. *kye che*) These are the six sensory objects such as a sight, a sound, a smell, a taste, and body sensation; the six sense faculties such as the visual sensory faculty, the auditory sensory faculty, etc. and the six sensory consciousnesses such as the visual consciousness, the auditory consciousness, etc. They make up the eighteen constituents for perception.

bhumi (Tib. *sa*) The levels or stages a bodhisattva goes through to reach enlightenment. Also called the bodhisattva levels. Usually comprised of ten levels in the sutra tradition and thirteen in the tantra tradition.

bodhisattva (Tib. *chang chup sem pa*) An individual who is committed to the mahayana path of practicing compassion and the six paramitas in order to achieve Buddhahood and free all beings from samsara. More specifically, those with a motivation to achieve liberation from samsara and are on one of the ten bodhisattva levels that culminates in Buddhahood.

bodhisattva levels (Skt. *bhuumi,* Tib. *sa*) The levels or stages a bodhisattva goes through to reach enlightenment. These consist of ten levels in the sutra tradition and thirteen in the tantra tradition.

buddha nature (Skt. *tathagatagarbha*, Tib. *de shin shek pay nying po*) The original nature present in all beings which when realized leads to enlightenment. It is often called the essence of Buddhahood or enlightened essence.

buddhadharma The teachings of the Buddha.

Cittamatra school (Tib. *sem tsampa*) A school founded by Asanga in the fourth century and is usually translated as the Mind Only School. It is one of the four major schools in the mahayana tradition and its main tenet (to greatly simplify) is that all phenomena are mental events.

clarity (Tib. *salwa*) Also translated as luminosity. The nature of mind is that it is empty of inherent existence, but the mind is not just voidness, completely empty because it has this clarity which is awareness or the knowing of mind. So clarity is a characteristic of emptiness (*shunyata*) of mind.

concealed treasures See terma.

conditioned existence (Skt. *samsara*, Tib. *khor wa*) Ordinary existence which contains suffering because one still possesses attachment, aggression, and ignorance. It is contrasted to liberation or nirvana.

consciousness (Skt.vijñana, Tib. *nam shé)*

consciousnesses, sensory These are the five sensory consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and body sensation.

consciousnesses, eight (Skt. *vijñana*, Tib. *nam shé tsog gye*) These are the five sensory consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and body sensation. Sixth is mental consciousness, seventh is afflicted consciousness, and eighth is ground consciousness.

conventional wisdom (Tib. *kunzop*) There are two truths: relative and absolute. Relative truth is the perception of an ordinary (unenlightened) person who sees the world with all his or her projections based on the false belief in ego.

Dakini (Tib. *khandroma*) A yogini who has attained high realizations of the fully enlightened mind. She may be a human being who has achieved such attainments or a non-human manifestation of the enlightened mind of a meditational deity.

definitive meaning (Tib. *nedon*)Teachings of the Buddha which give the direct meaning of dharma and are not changed or simplified for the capacity of the listener. This contrasts with the provisional meaning.

dharma (Tib. *chö*) This has two main meanings: Any truth such as the sky is blue and secondly, as used in this text, the teachings of the Buddha (also called buddha-dharma).

dharmadhatu (Tib. *chö ying*) The all-encompassing space, unoriginated and without beginning, out of which all phenomena arises. The Sanskrit means "the essence of phenomena" and the Tibetan means "the expanse of phenomena" but usually it refers to the emptiness that is the essence of phenomena.

dharmakaya (Tib. *chö ku*) One of the three bodies of Buddhahood. It is enlightenment itself, that is wisdom beyond reference point. See kayas, three.

dharmata (Tib. *chö nyi*) Dharmata is often translated as "suchness" or "the true nature of things" or "things as they are." It is phenomena as it really is or as seen by a completely enlightened being without any distortion or obscuration so one can say it is "reality."

dhatu (Skt., Tib. *kham*) There are five elements of everything in the world in Buddhism: earth, water, fire, wind, and space (or ether). The internal elements are the same but have a property associated with them so there is: earth (soldity), fluidity (water), fire (heat), wind (movement), and space (the vacuities within the body).

disturbing emotion (Tib. *nyön mong, Skt. klesha*) The emotional obscurations (in contrast to intellectual obscurations) which are also translated as "afflictions" or "poisons." The three main kleshas are (passion or attachment), (aggression or anger); and (ignorance or delusion). The five kleshas are the three above plus pride and (envy or jealousy).

dorje (Skt. *vajra*) Usually translated "diamond like." This may be an implement held in the hand during certain vajrayana ceremonies or it can refer to a quality that is so pure and so enduring that it is like a diamond.

dzogchen (Sk. *mahasandhi*) This is known also as the "great perfection" or atiyoga. It is the highest of the nine yanas according to the Nyingma tradition.

egolessness (Tib. *dag me*) Also called selflessness. There are two kinds of egolessness—the egolessness of other, that is, the emptiness of

external phenomena and the egolessness of self, that is, the emptiness of a personal self.

elements See dhatu.

emptiness (Skt. *shunyata* Tib. *tong pa nyi*) Also translated as voidness. The Buddha taught in the second turning of the wheel of dharma that external phenomena and the internal phenomena or concept of self or "I" have no real existence and therefore are "empty."

five buddha families (Tib. *rig nga*) These are the buddha, vajra, ratna, padma and karma families.

five paths (Tib. *lam nga*) Traditionally, a practitioner goes through five stages or paths to enlightenment. These are (1) The path of accumulation which emphasizes purifying one's obscurations and accumulating merit. (2) The path of junction or application in which the meditator develops profound understanding of the four noble truths and cuts the root to the desire realm. (3) The path of insight or seeing in which the meditator develops greater insight and enters the first bodhisattva level. (4) The path of meditation in which the meditator cultivates insight in the second through tenth bodhisattva levels. (5) The path of fulfillment which is the complete attainment of Buddhahood.

five sensory consciousnesses These are the sensory consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch or body sensation.

Gampopa (1079-1153 C.E.) One of the main lineage holders of the Kagyu lineage in Tibet. A student of Milarepa he established the first Kagyu monastic monastery and is known for writing the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*.

Gerab Dorje (*dga' rab rdo rje*) also called Pramoda Vajra. The forefather of the Dzogchen lineage who received the transmission from Vajrasattva

geshe (Tib.) A scholar who has attained a doctorate in Buddhist studies. This usually takes fifteen to twenty years to attain.

ground consciousness (Tib. *kunshi namshe*)The eighth consciousness which has the function of storing all the latent karmic imprints of experience. See consciousness, eight.

Hashang Mahayana (Tib. *rgya nag gi hva shang*) A Chinese meditation teacher whose view was repudiated by Kamalashila.

hinayana (Tib. *tek pa chung wa*) Literally, the "lesser vehicle." The term refers to the first teachings of the Buddha, which emphasized the careful examination of mind and its confusion. Also known as the Theravadin path.

jñana (Tib. *ye she*) Enlightened wisdom which is beyond dualistic thought.

Kamalashila An eighth century scholar in India who was a student of Shantarakshita and is best known for coming to Tibet and debating and defeating the Chinese scholar Hashang Mahayana at Samye monastery and then writing the *Stages of Meditation*.

kayas, three (Tib. *ku sum*) There are three bodies of the Buddha: the nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya and dharmakaya. The dharmakaya, also called the "truth body," is the complete enlightenment or the complete wisdom of the Buddha which is unoriginated wisdom beyond form and manifests in the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. The sambhogakaya, also called the "enjoyment body," manifests only to bodhisattvas. The nirmanakaya, also called the "emanation body," manifests in the world and in this context manifests as the Shakyamuni Buddha.

klesha (Tib. *nyön mong*) The emotional obscurations (in contrast to intellectual obscurations) which are also translated as "disturbing emotions" or "poisons." The three main kleshas are (passion or attachment), (aggression or anger); and (ignorance or delusion). The five kleshas are the three above plus pride and (envy or jealousy).

klesha consciousness (Tib. *nyön yid*) The seventh of the eight consciousnesses. See consciousnesses, eight.

latent karmic imprints (Skt. *vasana*, Tib. *pakchak*) Every action that a person does has an imprint which is stored in the eighth consciousness. These latencies express themselves later by leaving the eighth consciousness and entering the sixth consciousness upon being stimulated by external experience.

lovingkindness (Skt. *maitri*, Tib. *jam pa*) This is compassion for oneself and is a prerequisite to compassion for others (Skt. *karuna*).

luminous clarity (Tib. *salwa*) In the vajrayana everything is void, but this voidness is not completely empty because it has luminosity. Luminosity or clarity allows all phenomena to appear and is a characteristic of emptiness (Skt. *shunyata*).

Madhyamaka (Tib. *u ma*) This is a philosophical school founded by Nagarjuna in the second century. The main principle of this school is proving that everything is empty of self-nature using rational reasoning.

mahamudra (Tib. *cha ja chen po*) Literally, "great seal" meaning that all phenomena are sealed by the primordial perfect true nature. This form of meditation is traced back to Saraha (10th century) and was passed down in the Kagyu school through Marpa. It is, to greatly simplify, the meditation of examining mind directly.

mahayana (Tib. *tek pa chen po*) Literally, the "great vehicle." These are the teachings of the second turning of the wheel of dharma, which emphasize shunyata, compassion, and universal buddha nature.

Maitreya (Tib. *jampa*) In this work refers to the bodhisattva Maitreya who lived at the time of the Buddha. Maitreya is presently residing in the Tushita pure realm until he becomes the fifth buddha of this eon.

Manjushri (Tib. *Jampalyang*) A meditational deity representing discriminative awareness (prajña) known for knowledge and learning. Usually depicted as holding a sword in the right hand and scripture in the left.

mantra (Tib. *ngak)* These are invocations to various meditation deities which are recited in Sanskrit. These Sanskrit syllables, representing various energies, are repeated in different vajrayana practices.

mantrayana Another term for the vajrayana.

mental consciousness (Tib. *yid kyi namshe*) The sixth consciousness responsible for analyzing the sensory perceptions of the five sensory consciousnesses. See consciousnesses, eight.

middle way (Tib. *u ma*) or Madhyamaka School. A philosophical school founded by Nagarjuna and based on the Prajnaparamita sutras of emptiness.

Mind-Only school. Also called Chittamatra school. This is one of the major schools in the mahayana tradition founded in the fourth century by Asanga that emphasized everything is mental events.

Mipham Rinpoche (Tib. *mipham rinpoche*) Great Nyingma master and writer of last century.

Nagarjuna (Tib. *ludrup)* An Indian scholar in the second century who founded the Madhyamaka philosophical school which emphasized emptiness.

Nalanda The greatest Buddhist University from the fifth to the tenth century located near modern Rajgir that was the seat of the mahayana teachings and had many great Buddhist scholars who studied there.

Naropa (956-1040 C.E.) An Indian master who is best known for transmitting many vajrayana teachings to Marpa who took these back to Tibet before the Moslem invasion of India.

nirmanakaya (Tib. *tulku*) There are three bodies of the Buddha and the nirmanakaya or "emanation body" manifests in the world and in this context manifests as the Shakyamuni Buddha. See kayas, three.

nirvana (Tib. *nyangde)* Literally, "extinguished." Individuals live in samsara and with spiritual practice can attain a state of enlightenment in which all false ideas and conflicting emotions have been extinguished. This is called nirvana.

obscurations, two (Tib. *drippa nyi*) The obscuration of conflicting emotions and the obscuration of knowledge.

pandita (Tib. *pandita*) A great scholar.

paths, five (Tib. *lam nga*) Traditionally, a practitioner goes through five stages or paths to enlightenment. These are (1) The path of accumulation which emphasizes purifying one's obscurations and accumulating merit. (2) The path of junction or application in which the meditator develops profound understanding of the four noble truths and cuts the root to the desire realm. (3) The path of insight or seeing in which the meditator develops greater insight and enters the first bodhisattva level. (4) The path of meditation in which the meditator cultivates insight in the second through tenth bodhisattva levels. (5) The path of fulfillment which is the complete attainment of Buddhahood.

prajña (Tib. *she rab*) In Sanskrit it means "perfect knowledge" and can mean wisdom, understanding, or discrimination. Usually it means the wisdom of seeing things from a high (e.g. non-dualistic) point of view.

Prajñaparamita (Tib. *sherab chi parol tu chin pa*) The Buddhist literature outlining the mahayana path and emptiness written mostly around the second century.

pratyekabuddha (Tib. *rang sang gye*) Literally, solitary realizer. A realized hinayana practitioner who has achieved the knowledge of how it is and variety, but who has not committed him or herself to the bodhisattva path of helping all others.

provisional meaning (Tib. *drangdon*) The teachings of the Buddha which have been simplified or modified to the capabilities of the audience. This contrasts with the definitive meaning.

pure realm (Tib. *dag zhing*) Realms created by buddhas which are totally free from suffering and dharma there can be received directly. These realms are presided over by various buddhas such as Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara, and Maitreya who presides over Tushita.

Rongton School (Tib.) The Madhyamaka or middle way school divided into two major schools: the Rongtong which maintains voidness is devoid of inherent existence and Shentong which maintains voidness is indivisible from luminosity.

relative truth (Tib. *kunzop denpa*) There are two truths: relative and absolute. Relative truth is the perception of an ordinary (unenlightened) person who sees the world with all his or her projections based on the false belief in self.

rinpoche Literally, "very precious" and is used as a term of respect for a Tibetan guru.

rupakaya (Tib. *zuk kyi ku*) The form bodies which encompass the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya.

samadhi (Tib. *tin ne zin*) Also called meditative absorption or one-pointed meditation, this is the highest form of meditation.

shamatha or tranquility meditation (Tib. *shinay*) This is basic sitting meditation in which one usually follows the breath while observing the workings of the mind while sitting in the crosslegged posture.

sambhogakaya (Tib. *long chö dzok ku*) There are three bodies of the Buddha and the sambhogakaya, also called the "enjoyment body," is a realm of the dharmakaya which only manifests to bodhisattvas. See the three kayas.

samsara (Tib. *kor wa*) Conditioned existence of ordinary life in which suffering occurs because one still possesses attachment, aggression, and ignorance. It is contrasted to nirvana.

shastra (Tib. *tan chö*) The Buddhist teachings are divided into words of the Buddha (the sutras) and the commentaries of others on his works the (shastras).

Sautrantika school (Tib. *do dé pe*) One of the four major schools of Indian Buddhism. This is a hinayana school.

selflessness (Tib. *dag me*) Also called egolessness. In two of the hinayana schools (Vaibhashika and Sautrantika) this referred exclusively to the fact that "a person" is not a real permanent self, but rather just a collection of thoughts and feelings. In two of the mahayana schools (Chittamatra and Madhyamaka) this was extended to mean there was no inherent existence to outside phenomena as well.

salwa Tibetan for luminosity. In the vajrayana everything is void, but this voidness is not completely empty because it has luminosity. Luminosity or clarity allows all phenomena to appear and is a characteristic of emptiness (shunyata).

sending and taking practice (Tib. *tong len*) A meditation practice promulgated by Atisha in which the practitioner takes on the negative conditions of others and gives out all that is positive.

Shentong school (Tib.) The Madhyamaka or middle way school divided into two major schools: the Rongtong which maintains voidness is devoid of inherent existence and Shentong which maintains voidness is indivisible from luminosity.

siddha (Tib. *drup top)* An accomplished Buddhist practitioner.

siddhi (Tib. *ngodrup*) Spiritual accomplishments of accomplished practitioners.

skandha (Tib. *pung po*) Literally "heaps." These are the five basic transformations that perceptions undergo when an object is perceived: form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness. First is form which includes all sounds, smells, etc. everything we usually think of as outside the mind. The second and third are

sensations (pleasant and unpleasant, etc.) and identification. Fourth is mental events which actually include the second and third aggregates. The fifth is ordinary consciousness such as the sensory and mental consciousnesses.

killful means (Skt. *upaya,* Tib. *thab*) On the mahayana level, this is one of the ten paramitas and refers to dedicating the merits of all one's deeds to the benefit of all sentient beings. On the vajrayana level, it refers to practices of the internal yogas, which manipulate the internal energies and channels.

hravaka (Tib. *nyen thö*) Literally "those who hear" meaning disciples. A type of realized hinayana practitioner (arhat) who has achieved the realization of the nonexistence of personal self.

tupa (Tib. *chö ten*) A dome shaped monument to the Buddha which often contains relics and remains of the Buddha or great bodhisattvas.

uchness (Tib. *de kho na nyi*) This is things as they really are, not as they appear.

ugatagarbha (Tib. *der sheg nying po*) Buddha nature or that enlightened essence present in all beings that allows them to have the capacity to achieve enlightenment. It is closely related to tathagatagarbha.

hunyata (Tib. *tong pa nyi*) Usually translated as voidness or emptiness. The Buddha taught in the second turning of the wheel of dharma that external phenomena and internal phenomena or the concept of self or "I" have no real existence and therefore are "empty."

sutra (Tib. *do*) These are the hinayana and mahayana texts which are the words of the Buddha. These are often contrasted with the tantras which are the Buddha's vajrayana teachings and the *shastras* which are commentaries on the words of the Buddha.

sutrayana The sutra approach to achieving enlightenment which includes the hinayana and the mahayana.

tantra (Tib. *gyü)* One can divide Tibetan Buddhism into the sutra tradition and the tantra tradition. The sutra tradition primarily involves the academic study of the mahayana sutras and the tantric path primarily involves practicing the vajrayana practices. The tantras are primarily the texts of the vajrayana practices.

tathagatagarba (Tib. *deshin shekpai nying po*) Tathagatagarba, also called buddha nature, is the seed or essence of enlightenment which all persons possess and which allows them to have the potential to attain Buddhahood.

terton (Tib.) A master in the Tibetan tradition who discovers treasures (*terma*) which are teachings concealed by great masters of the past.

terma Literally, hidden treasure. Works which were hidden by great bodhisattvas and later rediscovered. They might be actual physical texts or they may come from "the sky" as transmissions from the sambhogakaya.

Theravada School (Tib. *neten depa*) A school, sometimes called the hinayana, which is the foundation of Buddhism and this school emphasizes the careful examination of mind and its confusion.

Theravadin (Tib. *neten depa pa*) A follower of the Theravada school.

Tilopa (928-1009 C.E.) One of the eighty-four mahasiddhas who became the guru of Naropa who transmitted his teachings to the Kagyu lineage in Tibet.

tranquility meditation (Skt. *shamatha*, Tib. *shinay)* A basic meditation practice aimed at taming and sharpening the mind. It is also called basic sitting meditation.

Tushita (Tib. *gan dan*) This is one of the heaven fields of the Buddha. Tushita is in the sambhogakaya and therefore is not located in any place or time.

two truths (Skt. *dvisatya*, Tib. *den pa gnyi*) There is the conventional or relative truth which is the world as we normally experience it with solid objects. The other truth is ultimate or absolute truth, which is that ultimately phenomena are empty.

ultimate level (Tib. *dondam*) This ultimate truth which can only be perceived by an enlightened individual is that all phenomena both internal (thoughts and feelings) and external (the outside physical world) does not have any inherent existence.

upaya (Tib. *tap*) Literally, skillful means. This is used by enlightened beings to present the dharma taking the person's capabilities and propensities into account.

Vaibashika school (Tib. *je trak ma wa*) One of the main hinayana schools. Also called Saravastivadins.

vajra (Tib. *dorje*) Usually translated "diamond like." This may be an implement held in the hand during certain vajrayana ceremonies, or it can refer to a quality which is so pure and so enduring that it is like a diamond.

vajrayana (Tib. *dorje tek pa*) There are three major traditions of Buddhism (hinayana, mahayana, vajrayana) The vajrayana is based on the tantras and emphasizes the clarity aspect of phenomena and is mainly practiced in Tibet.

Vasubandu (Tib. *yik nyen*) A great fourth century Indian scholar who was brother of Asanga and wrote the hinayana work the *Abhidharmakosha* explaining the Abhidharma.

Vinaya (Tib. *dul wa*) These are the teachings by the Buddha concerning proper conduct. There are seven main precepts that may be observed by lay persons and 125 or 320 to be observed by monks and nuns.

vipashyana meditation (Tib. *lha tong*) Sanskrit for "insight meditation" This meditation develops insight into the nature of mind. The other main meditation is shamatha meditation.

wisdom of the nature of phenomena (Tib. *ji ta ba*) One of the two ultimate types of wisdom of a buddha. This wisdom is the complete understanding of the nature of phenomena.

wisdom of the variety of phenomena (Tib. *ji nye pa*) One of the two ultimate types of wisdom of a buddha. This wisdom is the complete understanding of who all the different kinds of phenomena manifest.

yana (Tib. *thek pa*) Literally means vehicle but refers here to level of teaching. There are three main yanas (see hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana).

yogacarya Another name for the Chittamatra school.

Glossary of Tibetan Terms

Pronounced	Transliterated	English
cha ja chen po	phyag rgya chen po	mahamudra
chang chup sem pa	byang chup sems pa	bodhisattva
chö	chos	dharma
chö ku	chos sku	dharmakaya
chö ngön pa	chos mngon pa	Abhidharma
chöten	mchod rten	stupa
chö ying	chos dbyings	dharmadhatu
chö nyi	chos nyid	dharmata
dag me	dbag med	egolessness
dag nag	gdams ngag	oral instruction
dag zhing	dag zhing	pure realm
de kho na nyi	de kho na nyid	suchness
denpa matrub	bden pa	not truly established
denpa gnyi	bden pa gnyis	two truths
der sheg nying po	bde gshegs sning po?	sugatagarbha
do	mdo	sutra
do de pe	mdo sde pa	Sautrantika
dondam denpa	don dam bden pa	ultimate truth
dorje	rdo rje	vajra
dorje tek pa	rdo rje theg pa	vajrayana
drippa nyi	sgrib pa gnyis	2 obscurations
drup top	grub thabs	siddha
dul wa	'dul ba	Vinaya
dzogchen	rdzogs pa chen po	dzogchen meditat.
gan dan	dga' ldan	Tushita
Gerab Dorje	dga' rab rdo rje	Gerab Dorje
geshe	dge bshes	scholar
gom	sgom	meditation
gyu	rgyud	tantra
gyu lama	rgyud bla ma	Uttara Tantra
Hashang Mahayana	rgya nag gi hva shang	Hashang Mahayana
jam pa	byams pa	lovingkindness
jampalyang	'jam dpal dbyangs	Manjushri
je trak ma wa	bye brag smra ba	Vaibhashika
kham	khams	dhatu
khandroma	mkha' 'gro ma	dakini
khom	sgom	habituation
khor wa	'khor ba	samsara

ku	sku	body
ku sum	sku gsum	3 kayas
kunshi nampar shepa	kun gzhi' rnam shes pa	alaya consciousness
kun zop	kun rdzob	relative
kun zop den pa	kun rdzob bden pa	relative truth
kye che	skye mched	ayatanas
lam	lam	path
lhatong	lhag mthong	vipashyana
möpa	mos pa	aspiration
nam she	rnam shes	consciousness
neten depa	gnas brtan pa' sde pa	Theravada
ngelug	gnas lugs	true nature
ngedön	nges don	definitive mean.
ngodrup	dngos grub	siddhi
non mong	nyam mongs	klesha
nyangde	myang 'das	nirvana
nyen thö	nyan thos	shravaka
nyön yi	nyon yid	klesha conscious.
pakchak	bag chags	latent imprints
phung po nga	phung po nga	5 aggregates
rigpa	rig pa	awareness
rinpoche	rin po che	precious one
sa	sa	bodhisattva level
salwa	gsal wa	luminosity
sem	sems	mind
sem tsam	sems tsam	mind only
sem tsampa	sems tsam pa	Mind-only school
sherab	shes rab	prajna
parchin	pha rol tu phyin pa	Prajnaparamita
shinay	zhi gnas	shamatha
tan chö	bstan bcos	shastra
tek pa	theg pa	yana
tek pa chen po	theg pa chen po	mahayana
tek pa chung wa	theg pa chung ba	hinayana
terma	gter ma	dharma treasure
terton	gter ston	treasure seeker
thab	thabs	skillful means
tin ne zin	ting nge 'dzin	samadhi
tog pa	rtog pa	investigation
tonglen	glong len	send & taking
tong pa nyi	strong pa nyid	emptiness
tulku	sprul sku	nirmanakaya
u ma	dbu ma	Madhyamaka

Notes

1. This number in the root verse refers to the number of the verse. A copy of the root text with the Tibetan and English translation is available.
2. The root text was translated by Marpa Translation group under the direction of Khenpo Tsultrim.
3. The headings without a letter are headings added to help the reader, while the other heading correspond to the Outline of the text.
4. In our present day, for example, Trungpa Rinpoche received a shambhala text from Padmasambhava who lived over a 1,000 years ago and Dudom Rinpoche also received many ancient transmissions from Padmasambhava. The receiving of this knowledge is known as terma in Tibetan and a person who has the exceptional qualities and training to receive such a text is a terton.
5. Thrangu Rinpoche has always emphasized that all three traditions of hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana were practiced in Tibet and that the hinayana which literally means "lesser vehicle" is in no way inferior to the mahayana.
6. See Thrangu Rinpoche's *Ornament of Clear Realization*. Boulder: Namo Buddha Publications.
7. See Thrangu Rinpoche's *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes*. Boulder: Namo Buddha Publications.
8. See Thrangu Rinpoche's *The Uttara Tantra*. Boulder: Namo Buddha Publications.
9. Buddhists make a distinction between how the world appears to us and how it truly is. One modern example is that we may see a table and experience it as solid, as brown, and made of wood. That is how it appears (we could say the dharma of the table). However, a physicist will tell us that the table actually is a collection of millions of carbon atoms which are moving at tremendous speeds and there are tremendous distances between these atoms so the "table" is actually over 99.99% space. The color we see is just radiation given off at a certain wavelength. This is closer to what the table actually is (we could say the dharmata of the table). Experienced meditators (such as Milarepa) could demonstrate the emptiness of the table by simply putting their hand through it.

   So conventionally or on the relative level, when we hit our hand against a wall, it will get badly bruised and hurt. However,

on the ultimate level, the essence of the hand and the essence of the wall are empty.

10. The English translation for "dharma" is "phenomena" and for "dharmata" is "pure being."
11. As mentioned before with the example of the table and atoms, Buddhist make a distinction between how the world appears to us and how it truly is. So dharma is phenomena as we perceive it on the relative or conventional level and dharmata is phenomena as it truly is i.e. empty.
13. The Lankavatara sutra says:
    External reality appears as such to human beings
    From whose minds originate diverse dualities
    Due to an interaction between their discriminating thoughts and psychic imprints.
    External reality is the product of the mind:
    All appearances are, therefore, completely unreal,
    For they are all the manifestation of the mind.
14. This reasoning is presented in several of Rinpoche's books and goes somewhat like this: If we take a hand, we see that it is not a solid hand, but is made up of fingers, flesh, bones, etc. The only reason we say it is "a hand" is our mind imputes that it is a hand. If we take a finger, it also is a categorization and label because the finger is really made up of a fingernail, skin, joints, etc. When we keep breaking this down smaller and smaller, there is always a smaller particle. Say we reach the smallest indivisible particle, often called an atom, that atom can be broken down because it has a north corner, an east corner, a west corner, etc. In other words, it can always be broken down into smaller units.
15. These teachings were given at Thrangu Monastery which is outside the world's largest stupa, the Bodhanath Stupa.
16. Carrying this argument on, we may say, "Well, I can go outside and touch the stupa, paint it and so on and everyone else will see the same that I see." The answer to this is that yes we do see the same thing but it is more like a hundred people standing on the shore in a dark night looking at the moon reflected in the water. Now every single person sees the moon reflected in the water, but clearly the moon is not actually in the water. Everyone sees this illusion in the water because of the dependent conditions (Tib. *tendrel*) the persons having eyes, the night being dark, the water being still, and the moon being present.
17. This is because mind is also empty of any inherent nature, just as outside phenomena are.

18. By lacking inherent nature, by nature we mean in a example: take water it appears as solid (ice) sometimes, it appears a fluid (water) and as a hot gas (steam) other times. These are the three appearances of the water molecule. But its inherent or true nature is more like one atom of oxygen connected to atoms of hydrogen. Similarly, the greatest Madhyamaka scholar will say that houses, people, trees, and internal feelings such as anger and happiness do appear so they are obviously not non-existent. But when examined closely their true nature is empty in that they are not solid and real but projections of mind. Two people can go to the movie and one will see a beautiful, uplifting movie, while the other will see a terrible piece of trash. The actual movie or its true nature is neither, but simply a series of thousands of single frames on celluloid film, which the mind creates into a movie.
19. We choose to translate klesha as "disturbing emotions" rather than "afflictions" because although the Śanskrit word has the meaning of some permanent stain like an affliction, the Tibetan word *nyon mong* has more the meaning of something that disturbs the peace of the mind, these being, mainly attachment or desire, anger or aggression, bewilderment or ignorance, jealousy, and pride.
20. These teachings were given at Thrangu Rinpoche's monastery which is right next to the great stupa in Boudha, near Kathmandu in Nepal.
21. The person being born while in the bardo must choose this particular egg and sperm coming together for it to develop into a human.
22. The reasoning goes as such: The sensory consciousnesses receive sensory information or what are called sensory objects—say a white cup. How do we know it is a cup? We have to connect this visual object with some previous experience with the object so we know it holds tea, is fragile, is white, made of china, etc. This connection requires memory or a storehouse of information and that is what is stored in the alaya consciousness.
23. In other words, external phenomena are empty in that they do not have any inherent existence, while the mind is also empty, but it is a different kind of emptiness because the mind has his added quality of knowing, of being aware.
24. ithis refers to clairvoyance where certain individuals can perceive what is happening in other individual's consciousnesses. The point is that under these conditions unlike apprehending external phenomena their natures or basic material

(thoughts) are alike. In perception of out phenomena their natures are different with mind having the nature of consciousness and outer phenomena having the nature of materiality.

25. In India while the Madhyamaka school was prominent in Northern India, the Indians did not make a formal distinction between the Rongton or Shentong view. However, centuries later the Tibetans did make a distinction. Briefly, the Rongtong position which was supported by great scholars such as Tsonkhapa who went on to found the Gelugpa school maintained that everything was empty and to suggest that there was a permanent quality such as buddha nature negates the teachings on the emptiness of all phenomena. There were equally great scholars such as the third Karmapa, Rigpe Dorje, who maintained that there was an inherent permanent, stainless quality called "buddha nature' in all sentient beings.
26. One can think of it this way: the dharmakaya is the way things really are and since the Buddha achieved complete understanding of this state, the dharmakaya is the body of the Buddha. Only the minds of very pure beings such as other buddhas can perceive the dharmakaya, so there is the sambhogakaya with pure realms such as Tushita where pure bodhisattvas can visit and receive teachings. In fact, this is where Asanga went after twelve years of meditating to receive this text from the Maitreya Buddha. Finally, there is the nirmanakaya which is our ordinary reality and the Buddha came down and manifested as an ordinary human being as the Shakyamuni Buddha. This last realm can be experienced by impure beings such as ourself.

Appendix A

Mipham Rinpoche's General Introduction to Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata

To the one who has conquered the mountain, perceived and perceiver,
With the Vajra, original non-conceptual wisdom,
Thus finding the inconceivable wisdom body;
To the teacher supreme, the gifted master, I bow.

They who of treasures of dharma both vast and profound,
Are the holders, the one's who are heirs of the victor, Manjushri
And that tenth-level paragon, Regent undaunted, are they
The nails of whose feet are the jewels I support as my crown.

That which will here be explained is a critical treatise
Elucidating profound reality:
Original non-conceptual wisdom, the heart
Of Mahayana dharma's abundance of treasures.

That Heir of the Victor, the noble Asanga, performed the practice of the Beloved Master of Loving Kindness, Maitreya, for what measured in human time would be twelve years, at the end of which he beheld him face to face. As a result he was transported to the Joyous God-realm, Tushita, where he was presented with five works which include the two Ornaments, the two Distinctions, and the Uttara Tantra, which are treatises serving as commentaries on the purport of the teaching of the Victor in its entirety.

There are some scholars who consider all five as constituting a single coordinated treatise, while others refute this assertion on the grounds of the disagreement in their presentation of the ultimate on such points as there being one or three vehicles from the perspective of the definitive meaning.

Our own tradition considers them to be commentaries on the intent of the separate levels of the Teaching, taking the first and last as commentaries on the thought of the Madhyamaka, the middle three on that of the Chittamatra.

There are also some who consider *The Ornament of the Sutra Collection* alone to be a work of the Chittamatra, the other four to be Madhyamaka texts. There are some who consider *The Ornament of Direct Realization* to be Madhyamaka and the other four Chittamatra; still others still who locate all five within the thinking of the Chittamatra; and others who consider all five to belong within the thought of the Madhyamaka, and so on.

What can nevertheless be indisputably established is that *The Ornament of Realization* is a commentary on the Prajnaparamita in the context of the middle level of the Teaching; that *Uttara Tantra* is a commentary on the sutras presenting the Buddha-nature, which belongs to the definitive meaning associated with the final turning; and that both of these texts propose but one family and one vehicle ultimately, which is in accord with the thinking of the Madhyamaka.

The Ornament of the Sutra Collection is a commentary which compiles into one volume the topics of the majority of the sutras differing from those represented in the two above mentioned texts. On the whole, such factors as its lacking a decisive presentation of the single family and vehicle clearly indicate this text is primarily a commentary on the thought of the sutras associated with the Chittamatra.

The two Distinctions [*Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* and *Distinguishing the Middle and Extremes*] teach the vast as well as the profound dimensions of the [mahayana] vehicle in general. Even though these [two texts] extensively teach the three natures and the sense in which outer objects do not exist, this in itself does not restrict them to being works of the Chittamatra alone insofar as the thinking of the Madhyamaka could also be interpreted in terms of such dharma terminology without incurring a contradiction. In the *Lankavatara* sutra such terms are taught as general headings applicable to the whole of the mahayana path, as follows:

The five prevailing themes and natures three,
Along with the eight-fold collection of consciousness
And the pith in the two forms of lack of self-entity
Throughout the Mahayana these are found.

This is also explicitly illustrated by the *Maitri Pariprichcha* sutra or "The Sutra Requested by Maitreya" which clarifies the intent of the

Mother, where such dharma terms as "the three essentials" and so on are taught without there being a single categorical statement or logical argument which would necessarily amount to asserting true existence for the consciousness empty of dualism as this is asserted in the works of the Chittamatra. There is therefore no error whatsoever in classifying [the two Distinctions] as commentaries which do not fall into any specific school of the [mahayana], but apply to the whole vehicle in general.

Moreover, precisely because they follow the style exhibited by such major works, *Distinguishing the Middle from The Extremes* is a work teaching the vast aspect, (meaning the stages of the paths of all three vehicles) and *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* is a work which, commensurate with the way in which the yogacarya-Madhyamaka unites the two truths, conclusively portrays the very heart of the theme found in all sutra collections treating of the profound, namely, non-conceptual original wisdom.

It is precisely for this reason and due to their extraordinary profundity that the manuscript of this present work and of *Uttara Tantra* already in the Indian period were bound with a seal of secrecy and later in that period disappeared from circulation. It was at that time that the mighty lord Maitripa, on discovering light emerging from a crack in a stupa, extracted the manuscripts of *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* and the *Uttara Tantra* and disseminated them anew. Therefore, while Shama Lotsawa Senge Gyaltsen was studying *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* and preparing his translation of it, his learned teacher emphasized its significance by giving him only one page at a time with the admonition, "Beware that no harm befalls this! It is a text which is rarely available, because it is bound with a seal. Its disappearance would be tantamount to the Body of the Beloved Master of Loving Kindness, Maitreya, passing from this world into nirvana."

Since what it teaches is profound reality, which is the critical secret embodied within the view, and because the realization of such a view is required of all practitioners of the mahayana, there is no incongruity in interpreting it from the perspective of either the Madhyamaka or the Chittamatra systems. Nevertheless, even given that such texts as the *Prajnaparamita* sutras are interpreted in the works of individual Chittamatra and Madhyamaka preceptors in accordance with their respective schools, their ultimate purport rests with the Madhyamaka. Similarly, even though there are scholars in whose treatises also this present work is interpreted according to the Chittamatra, since this is relevant to a specific level of mental development, there is no contradiction in explaining it. Nevertheless,

it is in fact a work which clearly portrays the character of nothing less than non-conceptual original wisdom, the point of the utmost profundity within the mahayana, for which reason it serves as a commentary applicable in general to any sutra treating of the profound. Since it accords with the Chittamatra in the form, its assertions take with respect to host phenomena, which constitute apparent reality. Since it accords with the Madhyamaka in its interpretation of dharmata, which constitutes genuine reality, it demonstrates the key points of mahayana view by uniting the Chittamatra and Madhyamaka, while its ultimate purport rests with the Madhyamaka. To understand and explain it in this way covers the entire range of implication afforded by this great treatise.

Our Other Books of Thrangu Rinpoche

The Spiritual Biography of Marpa, the Translator/Thrangu Rinpoche, Geshe Lharampa, Translated by Ken and Katia Holmes

The Uttar Tantra : A Treatise on Buddha Nature : A Translation of the Root text and a Commentary/ Tran. by Ken and Katia Holmes

The Development of Buddhism in India/Thrangu Rinpoche

A Spiritual Biography of Rechungpa/ Thrangu Rinpoche, Geshe Lharampa

The Four Ordinary Foundations of Buddhist Practice/ Tr. Ken and Katia Holmes

The Uttar Tantra: A Treatise on Buddha Nature : A Commentary on the Uttara Tantra Sastra/ Tran. Ken and Katia Holmes

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